



Daily Report

Central Eurasia

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Terrorist Activity

Russia: Chechen 'Black Wolves' Said To Attack 58th Army

LD2602172296 Moscow NTV in Russian
1600 GMT 26 Feb 96

[From the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] The military themselves are giving their own version of the events that occurred [in Ingushetia], and they are reacting sharply to the criticism levelled at them. Here is a report from Vladikavkaz.

[Unidentified correspondent over video of news conference] The Black Wolves — this is what the detachment of Chechen fighters is called who attacked the battalion of the 58th Army that was going to Chechnya through Ingushetia to replace an army subunit.

[Lieutenant General] Gennadiy Troshin, commander of the 58th army, said this at a news conference in Vladikavkaz today. Troshin said that settlements in Ingushetia were not blockaded at all and the parents of those who were killed, who have already arrived in Vladikavkaz, are demanding that criminal proceedings should be instituted against the leadership of Ingushetia since it was namely on the territory of this republic that Russian servicemen died.

[Begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent] Has it been established who the fighters who attacked the battalion belonged to? Was it a Chechen bandit formation that broke through or were they Ingush fighters?

[Troshin] We have documents that we seized from the fighters who were killed. We have weapons. A group of fighters are edging their way 10-12 km through the territory of Ingushetia and have been waging a battle not for one or two hours, but for two days and not 10 or 15 people. According to our information, according to our calculations, according to our intelligence, the number of fighters over these days numbered up to 200-300 men. [end recording] [video shows news conference by military, map in background]

Military Activity

Russia: Troop Withdrawal From Ingushetia Viewed

LD2602214396 Moscow NTV in Russian
1900 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Postfaktum news agency has reported that Ingushetia's President Ruslan Aushev today appealed to the Constitutional Court of Russia in connection with what he calls the unsanctioned arrival of troops into Ingushetia. He is demanding a special investigation into the legality of the actions of the

power-wielding structures. The troops which are the bone of contention left Ingushetia today.

[Begin recording] [Unidentified Man] [Video shows man in street, holding piece of paper and pencil, counting number of vehicles passing by] Forty four motor vehicles; one, two, three, four, five infantry fighting vehicles.

[NTV Correspondent Sergey Agaponov] This man, an Ingush living in a village near the Chechen frontier, is denoting by strokes in this notebook the number of tanks, Infantry Fighting Vehicles, APCs and trucks with soldiers left Ingushetia for Chechnya.

[Unidentified Man] The troops are still in [words indistinct]. They haven't all left yet. We will demand that. We are holding a rally demanding that they should all be withdrawn from the territory of Ingushetia. We fear combat operations on our territory. Troops shouldn't have been brought in to our territory.

[Agaponov] It seems that attempts to involve another republic with a Vaynakh population in the conflict in the North Caucasus have failed. It is not yet clear what the consequences of the five days' events near the Ingush village of Arshty will be.

Russian generals do not tire of repeating that the troops were not brought into Ingushetia. However, no matter who states what, the units of the 58th Army went on a march to Chechnya to replace the subunits which are being withdrawn from Chechnya, and that march was carried out on the territory of Ingushetia. The main battalion was fired upon on Ingush territory. Fighting occurred on Ingush territory.

[General Gennadiy Troshin, commander of the 58th Army, said at a news conference in Vladikavkaz today that his units were attacked by Dudayev's special purpose Black Wolves, commanded by Aslan Maskhadov. Troshin has grievances against the leadership of Ingushetia. [passage omitted] However, both leaders of Ingushetia, President Aushev and Vice President Boris Agapov — incidentally, they are both generals — have grievances against the military.

[Agapov] A lot of mines were scattered along the entire route along which the troops were operating. That is to say, they evidently tried to secure the (?main) route and laid mines.

[Unidentified female correspondent] As a kind of insurance?

[Agapov] Yes, you see, although you can hear statements that the army did not expect anything, that the troops were not considering waging combat operations

on the territory of the republic, the fact that there were mines planted practically under every bush bears witness to the fact that they intended to fight there for a long time and in earnest.

[Agaponov] Aushev thinks that he should have been informed about the march which was being prepared. Observers note that in the situation which has evolved in the North Caucasus today, this should have been done. Aushev is a man with considerable combat experience and has authority among the population of Ingushetia. Had he been informed of the measures by the 58th Army, if he had not helped the military, at least he would not have hindered them. For instance, he could have advised the Russian generals which road to take, for it is quite clear now that the path which the commanders of the Russian subunits chose was, to put it mildly, not the best one. The route to be taken by the column lay immediately beside the mountainous Chechen village of Bamut, known because the most hardened separatists are there. There is information that it was namely from Bamut that some of the attackers penetrated Ingush territory.

Moreover, the Russian military once again showed a complete ignorance of the real situation in the North Caucasus today. They do not know anything about the customs, morals, or views of the local population, about the landscape, or the weather conditions at the end of February.

The results of the actions by the Russian generals are well known. [passage omitted]

Now that the conditions of the agreement between President Aushev and the Russian generals on unblocking Arshty and on withdrawing troops from Ingushetia to Chechnya have been fulfilled, the column has moved on.

The generals, who received a good education in higher military schools and academies, are continuing to grasp the practice of military science through their own mistakes. But the price is too high — human lives. [Video shows military vehicles moving along road, man counting vehicles, interview with Agapov] [end recording]

Russia: Commander Justifies Troops' Actions in Ingushetia

LD2602143896 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1302 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] VLADIKAVKAZ, Feb 26 (INTERFAX) — Lt.-Gen. Gennadiy Troshev, commander of the 58th Army in the North Caucasus military district

of Russia, has denied all allegations that the passage of his troops through Ingushetia was illegal.

"A unit of my army — a motorized infantry battalion — was moving toward its deployment point on Russian territory" to replace a battalion which had been in Chechnya for eight months, Troshev said at a press conference in Vladikavkaz on Monday.

"I pulled the battalion out not because I felt guilty for something, but in order to save the lives of the soldiers," he said, adding that "the battalion has already crossed the border with Chechnya. It could have done that without any losses, but, unfortunately, there are forces which succeeded in disrupting" its peaceful exit.

Commenting on Ingush President Ruslan Aushev's assertions that the republic's leadership had not been informed about the passage of the troops, the general noted that "Aushev himself could not explain to me why armed groups are wondering around Ingushetia and how I should understand the fact that it was these groups that attacked the troops heading for Chechnya."

"I want them to explain to me how armed groups of Chechens happened to be 18-20 kilometers inside Ingushetia," he said.

Troshev said his troops fought with over 200 rebels for two days. He quoted intercepted radio conversations as saying that Chechen military chief Aslan Maskhadov had ordered groups of 100 to 150 rebels to move to the combat area.

Russia: Troshev Orders Inquiry Into Death of Troops in Ingushetia

LD2602143396 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1302 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] VLADIKAVKAZ, Feb 26 (INTERFAX) — Commander of the 58th army Lieutenant-General Gennadiy Troshev told INTERFAX Monday that he had issued the order to begin an investigation into the loss of life among federal troops in Ingushetia.

The results will be passed to the Caucasian inter-regional prosecutor in order to start legal action.

Lt. Gen. Troshev believes that an information leak allowed the Chechen militants to plan an attack in advance on the motorized infantry battalion of the 503rd regiment of the 58th army in Ingushetia. He also said that elite Chechen units had carried out the attack.

He announced that the parents of the killed servicemen had arrived in Vladikavkaz to demand criminal proceedings against the Ingush leaders through whose fault their children had died.

Political Reaction

Russia: Premier Denies Chechen War Financed by Foreign Credits

LD2602174196 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1657 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 26 (INTERFAX) — Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin has denied accusations against the Russian government that they use credits provided by international financial institutions to finance the conflict in Chechnya. These accusations were put forward by Communist Party of Russia leader Gennadiy Zyuganov.

"Everyone makes judgements depending on his own level of corruption," Chernomyrdin said.

"To make statements of the kind, it is necessary either to know the situation and the mechanism for the distribution of funds very well — and we are informed of Zyuganov's capabilities and his level of economic knowledge — or not to know the situation at all," Chernomyrdin said. He believed that in Zyuganov's case the second assumption seemed "more obvious."

Regarding the Communist Party's election platform, Chernomyrdin said he had himself been a Communist champion and thus "knows Zyuganov's price." He said for 70 years the Russian people strove for the ideal of Communism, and they do not want to do this any longer.

Chernomyrdin said present market-economy reforms in the country were based on the "classic scheme" which the Russian government adapted to Russian soil in order to implement reforms.

Chernomyrdin stressed that he saw no alternative to the course of market-economy reforms.

Russia: Presidential Council Member Details Chechnya Peace Plan

LD2602185496 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1731 GMT 26 Feb 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Leading political scientist and a member of the presidential council Emil Payin says the peace proposals for Chechnya drawn up by a group of council members he leads are based on the use of diplomatic leverage.

He told INTERFAX on Monday that the 30-member group included the best Moscow experts in regional conflicts and North Caucasus problems as well as members of parliament and journalists familiar with the situation in Chechnya.

Payin said the group's peace plan was submitted to senior Kremlin aide Viktor Ilyushin last Thursday, "hours before the other group led by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin did so."

He said the package includes the guidelines for resolving the conflict, a phased action plan and an analysis of seven possible scenarios for regional peace. He said that apart from the options mentioned by President Yeltsin, there were some suggested by political scientists from other countries.

Payin did not elaborate apart from saying the group's plan was drawn up only in two copies and that any leakage to the press was next to impossible.

And he added Russia's Chechnya policy would have to be somewhat reviewed if Yeltsin decided to use his peace plan as the basis.

Russia: Combined Military, Political Solution in Chechnya Urged

LD2602215096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English
2140 GMT 26 Feb 96

[By Vyacheslav Bondarenko]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ROSTOV-ON-DON, February 27 (ITAR-TASS) — The commander of Russia's North Caucasus military district, Anatoliy Kvashnin, called for combining combat operations with political measures to resolve the conflict in Chechnya.

"There are many sober-minded people in Chechnya. We must reopen schools and hospitals there, provide people with jobs, pay pensions and rebuild the economy, and then people will understand who their ally is," Kvashnin said at a press conference on Monday.

He noted that the negotiating process between the military, civilian authorities and the population is developing very actively in Chechnya. "We are talking not to bandits, but to the residents of villages and we have already signed peace agreements with several dozens of them," he said.

Under these agreements, villages set up self-defence units to maintain public order and regular army troops are called in only when it is necessary to destroy "intransigent" rebels outside their villages, he explained.

"The nearer the end of Dudayevism, the more inhuman its acts," Kvashnin added.

He stressed that elections to the Chechen parliament and the formation of local bodies of power are crucial elements in the general efforts to resolve the conflict in this North Caucasus region of Russia.

Russia: Commander Rules Out Talks With Chechen 'Bandits'*LD2602153696 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1400 GMT 26 Feb 96*

[Report over video from Roston-na-Donu by correspondent N. Denisova; from the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Our army has never been weak, Colonel-General Anatoliy Kvashnin, commander of the North Caucasus military district, told a news conference today. During his two-hour meeting with journalists the commander set out his stand on the main problems of the Chechen conflict. He insisted that the army's actions have been correct and accused the Dudayevites of wrecking all agreements, starting with the peace agreement on a package of military issues which was signed as long ago as July 1995.

Asked about the prospects for a peaceful solution to the Chechen conflict, Anatoliy Kvashnin resolutely declared that negotiations with field commanders and fighters are impossible since most of them are bandits. [video shows a building, A. Kvashnin, commander of North Caucasus military district, identified by caption, speaking to journalists and pointing out positions on map behind him; TV monitor playing a video; footage of muddy village, man with RPG and rockets]

[Begin Kvashnin recording] Bandits from all over the former USSR, that is, from the CIS states as they are now known, and from Russia gathered in the Chechen Republic. They include bandits who were wanted throughout the Soviet Union and are now wanted throughout Russia, those who were already smeared in blood before this and who are now completely drenched. What talks can you hold with such a gang of mafiosi organizations who want to secure privileges for themselves through these talks?

Talks are now being held with each individual village. Talks are now being held with every settlement. Agreements are being signed between these villages and the Government of the Chechen Republic and the command of the temporary joint forces. [end recording]

Such agreements have already been signed with dozens of Chechen villages and settlements. New administrations and internal affairs bodies are now being formed there. Their job is to make sure that armed fighters do not operate on their territory.

Russia: Ingush VP: Troop Deployment 'Incorrect' From Start*LD2602142996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1302 GMT 26 Feb 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NAZRAN, Feb 26 (INTERFAX) — The Russian federal troops that February 21 blockaded several settlements in Ingushetia, a Russian North Caucasian republic, are expected to leave Ingush territory by 3 p.m. Monday, Ingush Vice-President Boris Agapov told INTERFAX.

Advanced detachments of the federal troops, moving along the Rostov-Baku highway, have reached Chechen territory. No incidents have been reported during the troops withdrawal, said Agapov.

"The Russian commanders' lack of talent put Ingushetia on the verge of involvement in the Chechen conflict," he said in comment on the actions of the federal troops in Ingushetia.

The route of the 58th army re-deployment in Chechnya was incorrect from the very start, said Agapov. "It brought the federal units directly to the Bamut group of gunmen loyal to [Chechen separatist leader Dzhokhar] Dudayev. Weather, terrain, and, most important, the feelings of the Ingush people were not taken into account. Being in critical condition, the federal troops were the first to open disorderly fire," he said. As a result, three civilians were killed and four wounded near the settlement of Arshty on February 22.

"The lack of communication between federal units sometimes resulted in their shelling each other. All this could have been avoided, had the Ingush authorities been informed promptly about the movement of federal troops via Ingush territory," said the vice-president.

CIS: ITAR-TASS Carries Press Review for 27 Feb
LD2702071596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English
0612 GMT 27 Feb 96

[“Press Review” — ITAR-TASS headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW February 27 (Itar-Tass) - Follows a review of Tuesday's Moscow-based Russian newspapers dated February 27. The tyre factory fire that blazed out in Moscow on the night from Saturday to Sunday, the forthcoming Presidential elections, and the arrest of Robert Stephen Lipka, former staff member of the U.S. National Security Agency, are major topics in today's newspapers.

KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA on the tyre factory fire.

“Last time a blaze of such an intensity and category of complexity was recorded in Moscow in 1977 when Rossiya Hotel was gutted out. About 15,000 square metres of the factory grounds have been affected by the fire. One of the main dangers has been posed by a mixture of rubber and sulphur strong poisonous fumes,” the newspaper writes.

IZVESTIYA on the causes of the tyre factory fire.

The newspaper believes that possible causes of the fire might be the actions of the factory's competitors, who struggled for millions-worth contract with foreign firms for the manufacture of ‘Eurotyres’, or revenge by someone dismissed from the factory for imbibing on the job and absenteeism.

ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI on the forthcoming Presidential elections in Russia.

Under the headline “Do not mistake real chances for illusory ratings”, the newspaper runs an interview with Professor Georgiy Satarov, Assistant to the President of the Russian Federation on Political Affairs, who believes that present-day ratings of presidential contenders do not reflect the true state of things in every respect.

“One should take into account first of all the dynamics of the change of rating estimates: since August the President's rating has been steadily rising, and, according to data available with me, this rise will accelerate. Consequently, what (Gennadiy) Zyuganov has now is his peak, whereas (Boris) Yeltsin's popularity with the electorate is on the up-and-up”.

NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA on the President's message to the Federal Assembly.

The newspaper carries an interview with Yuriy Baturin, Assistant to the President on National Security Affairs, who points out that “although the Message bears a certain imprint of the election year, still it is primarily

an annual message on the state of affairs in the country and on basic orientations of the policy of the Russian Federation, as is provided for by the Constitution of Russia.”

Baturin is of the opinion that the main idea of the Message is historical responsibility. The second basic idea is an economic reform, its ups and downs and prospects.

“Whether we want it or not, the economic reform is the key aspect of the entire situation in recent years. Since the attitude to it on the part of various political forces and population will in many respects determine the outcome of the Presidential elections,” Baturin emphasised.

KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA on the need for the unity of all democratic forces.

The newspaper runs an interview with Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, leader of the political movement Yabloko. Touching upon the forthcoming Presidential elections, Yavlinskiy called for the unity of all democratic forces.

“If non-Communist forces unite, it will be possible to poll more than 23 per cent of the vote and qualify for a run-off,” Yavlinskiy points out. He regards Communist Party leader Gennadiy Zyuganov as a likely finalist in a presidential election run-off in the coming summer.

PRAVDA on materials collected by a parliamentary commission for inquiry into the Chechnya conflict.

The newspaper begins to publish a number of materials collected by the Parliamentary Commission, organised by the State Duma and headed by Stanislav Govorukhin to scrutinise the Chechnya conflict.

“The amount of materials collected by the Commission (19 volumes) renders it impossible to publish all of them in the newspaper. But the main conclusions and suggestions with comment by Commission Chairman Stanislav Govorukhin give, in our view, a rather good idea of the causes and circumstances of the outbreak of the Chechnya tragedy,” the newspaper points out.

RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA on the shadow economy.

The newspaper gives the opinion of Major-General Aleksandr Dementyev, Head of the Russian Interior Ministry's Directorate on Economic Crimes. According to the Directorate, 40 per cent of funds are now being spinned in the shadow economy. “It is quite evident that those funds are not invested in industry, agriculture or the social welfare sector. This money reproduces crime,” the General emphasises. His opinion is that the fight against crime will not be successful until the financial basis of the underworld is undermined.

IZVESTIYA on the arrest of former U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) staff member Robert Stephen Lipka.

The newspaper gives the opinions of some veterans of Soviet and Russian intelligence services about the role of former KGB general Oleg Kalugin, who in one of his books delineated the portrait of a source of information inside the NSA and even disclosed the latter's real cover name — Rook.

"The Americans uncovered and arrested KGB agent Robert Lipka due to the portrait given in Kalugin's book. Such information is of lasting value," said one of the veterans who believes that under a different power in Russia Kalugin ought to have been put on trial for the damage done to the intelligence service.

CIS: Ukrainian, Turkmen Ministers Satisfied With Relations

LD2602150596 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1225 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ashgabat, February 26 (Interfax-Ukraine) — Foreign Ministers Hennadiy Udovenko of Ukraine and Boris Shikhmuradov of Turkmenistan have expressed satisfaction with the development of relations between the two nations.

This was disclosed to pressmen upon completion of a brief meeting between the two Ministers in Ashgabat airport, where H. Udovenko was on a stop-over on his way to Indonesia.

Speaking about prospects for tripartite cooperation between Ukraine, Turkmenistan and Iran, B. Shikhmuradov said that the three Foreign Ministers have been scheduled to meet in Kiev "next April at the latest". He estimated the overall Ukraine-Turkmenistan-Iran trade turnover at \$62.2 million.

"Our relations shall not be reduced solely to gas supplies", the Ukrainian Minister underscored. In the course of the meeting the two sides have discussed bilateral relations including issues involved in cooperation in military technology, he said.

The two nations hold "practically identical" stands on the Commonwealth of Independent States, both Ministers said.

In reply to an Interfax-Ukraine question about prospects for Turkmenistan's accession to the CIS Customs Union, B. Shikhmuradov said: "We are not prepared for accession yet", adding "this is a matter of time".

CIS: Georgia's Claims to Black Sea Fleet Examined WS2602144196 Kiev VSEUKRAINSKIYE VEDOMOSTI in Russian 20 Feb 96 p 3

[Article by Elina Nesterenko: "Will the Georgian Navy Appear in Crimea? Georgia's Claims to the Black Sea Fleet May Prevent Boris Yeltsin's Visit to Kiev"]

[FBIS Translated Text] It seemed that the problems concerning the division of the Black Sea Fleet, which triggered verbal battles between Ukrainian and Russian politicians, would soon be completely resolved. According to certain forecasts, a visit to Kiev by Russian President Boris Yeltsin should have dotted all the "i's" in this regard. However, demands for the participation of a third party — Georgia — in this matter have unexpectedly emerged. Moreover, this republic attempted to draw the attention of both Ukraine and Russia to itself a long time ago, but the unstable domestic situation and the stormy process of political and economic reforms prevented it from doing this. And now that — in the opinion of the Georgian side — domestic processes have normalized, Georgia has decided to announce claims for its share in the divided Black Sea Fleet.

Georgia's claims seem to be untimely, to put it politely. First, if the Ukrainian-Russian bilateral negotiations were currently transformed into trilateral talks, this process, which has lasted for almost two years now, could drag on for an undefined period of time. First of all, this situation would cause irreparable damage to the Black Sea Fleet itself. After all, as everyone knows, the majority of ships are already antiquated and require overhauls and modernization. And to do this, the Fleet needs a concrete owner. If the process of settling the problem is protracted for another several years, there will simply be nothing to divide. The same relates to the onshore infrastructure, which still has some value. For quite a while it has been no secret that the Russian side has intensively been "ravaging" the infrastructure while shipping the most valuable things to the Russian Federation.

Additionally, certain forces from Russia's highest echelons of power, who want Ukraine to receive virtually nothing valuable, are using the tactic of "scorched land" while transferring property, to put it figuratively. As the INTERFAX-UKRAINE news agency has recently learned, at the order of the command of a Black Sea Fleet unit which is currently "being transferred", all official documentation was destroyed, including documents on employing and dismissing employees, maps, and blueprints. Because this unit includes a group of Black Sea Fleet rescue ships, one can imagine to what degree this loss will complicate future rescue operations.

Plus, additional difficulties with calculating employees' pension benefits augur imminent troubles right up to riots.

Second, it is common knowledge that the Russian side has not yet abandoned its terms — first, full division of the Black Sea Fleet, and then Boris Yeltsin's visit to Kiev. Our country's media have repeatedly written about the importance of this visit to both Ukraine and Russia. Georgia's interference in the process of "dividing" may again "freeze" it until an unknown time. From this position, the coincidence of the Georgian Foreign Ministry's statement on its country's claims to "its own share" and the approaching end of the process of dividing the Black Sea Fleet between Russia and Ukraine seems to be intentional. One may presume that it is convenient for certain forces in the Russian Federation which have plans for the presidential elections in this country to drag out the "division." To put it another way, if Boris Yeltsin does not settle at least some of the Ukrainian-Russian problems as president, this, along with his other "blunders," may result in his defeat in the electoral race. Thus, the following question arises: Is the fact that Georgia is demanding its "share" now inspired by Boris Nikolayevich's "foes"?

However, even if one leaves only the official version about the emergence of Georgia's claims, many questions will rise anyway. For example, how is the Georgian side going to participate in the process of dividing the Black Sea Fleet? Does it need ships or monetary compensation? The chief of the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry Department for CIS Countries, Oleksandr Bozhko, has commented on this as follows: "In my opinion, the talk is just about money: The Georgian economy, as everyone knows, is not going through its best times." The Georgian ambassador to our country, Valeriy Chechelashvili, sees a different solution to the

problem: "We have laid claims for our share of property, and it has no essential importance to us in what form we will receive it — either in money or in material form."

There is also the question of whom Georgia is going to hold talks with given that, as everyone knows, Ukraine and Russia are dividing the part of the Fleet which is stationed in our country, or more precisely — in Crimea. In the opinion of Mr. Bozhko, "Georgia should address its claims to Russia and resolve the question of dividing the 'Georgian' part of the Black Sea Fleet, that is, the ships moored in the republic's ports, with Russia." Mr. Chechelashvili has stated, however, that "our understanding of the Black Sea Fleet is the entire Fleet stationed in Black Sea waters. Negotiations should thus be conducted with both the Russian and Ukrainian sides. I think we will soon find a common language because our country has friendly relations with both Ukraine and Russia." To the question of whether we will have to find stationing sites for Georgian ships in Crimea as well, the ambassador has replied as follows: "I think there will never be a Georgian Navy in Crimea. We would only like to independently control our sea and defend our borders in the future."

Nonetheless, judging from all signs, Ukraine will soon be dragged into another negotiating process. True, this time there will be talks on dividing the Black Sea Fleet "among three parties." As a matter of fact, Georgia is undoubtedly correct — it is also a maritime state, and it also participated in the establishment of the navy in the Black Sea, and thus has the full right to demand its share. It is still unknown what kind of compensation Georgia will insist on. In any event, this does not augur anything good for our country: Where can we find money to appease Georgia's "appetite?"

Russia: NATO and Moscow Need 'Special Relationship'

MK2302150096 Moscow *SEGODNYA* in Russian
23 Feb 96 p 9

[Report by Yuriy Davydov of the U.S. and Canadian Studies Institute: "Will Russia Be Able To Cut Through a Window on NATO? The 'Special Relationship' Russia Needs"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The problem of NATO's eastward expansion, which was temporarily put on the back burner by the December decision of the NATO Council not to consider membership applications until 1997, the Dayton accords on Bosnia, presidential elections in Poland, and parliamentary elections in Russia, is becoming a matter of European discussion once again. The sides' stances have not changed in any drastic fashion, but they have acquired new aspects that make it possible under certain conditions to go beyond the limits of the former "zero sum game" in which one side's victory meant the other side's defeat. The emergence of these new factors has been caused by a number of circumstances.

First, the question of NATO expansion was effectively left outside the Russian election campaign and did not affect the outcome of the elections. It turned out that Russia's exhausted society is absolutely indifferent to the outside world and the potential threats it might pose; internal ones seem to be more serious. Former communists knocked out the democrats by emphasizing domestic issues, not because their opponents appeared to be more loyal to the West. For this reason Russian politicians' thesis that NATO expansion will inevitably mean a defeat of democracy in Russia has been rendered irrelevant because it has already suffered a defeat. Moreover, the West itself is more preoccupied with stability in Russia than with its democracy. This removes the main restraint holding up NATO expansion. On the other hand, changes in Smolenskaya Square give hope for an adjustment of Russia's foreign policy line that will reflect the fact that it is its ability to influence the international situation — not its invariable "No" in response to the West — that makes for Russia's prestige and greatness, and the independence of its policy. Therefore both sides may now have more room to maneuver, including a move on the question of relations between NATO and Russia.

Second, the outcome of the presidential election in Poland: the victory of former communist Kwasniewski. For all his desire to leave his past behind (his first foreign trip was to the NATO headquarters to reaffirm Poland's determination to join the alliance) caused certain confusion in NATO circles: Will there not be too

many former communists in the alliance? The case of former Polish Prime Minister Oleksy, however it might end, has increased their wariness as well as their desire to take a time-out of sorts.

Third, despite harsh statements by Russian servicemen and politicians, the tendency toward cooperation between Russia and NATO continues gaining ground. The cooperation develops as part of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council's, "Partnership for Peace," as well as through personal contacts between military leaders. Yet its most remarkable manifestation is Russian participation in NATO's Bosnian operation. Despite their stern tone ("Russian soldiers shall never take orders from NATO") discussions between the two sides produced forms of cooperation between Russia and NATO in Bosnia that suit them both. Without being officially part of the NATO contingent, and stopping short of officially taking orders from the alliance's command, Russia cooperates with NATO in Bosnia according to a joint plan, carrying out a joint mission. Russian General Shevtsov stays in Brussels on a continuing basis coordinating these activities. The process of this Bosnian collaboration brings forth the outlines of a model of cooperation between the two sides' armed forces in resolving problems of all-European security.

Under the combined impact of these circumstances the West is beginning to see the problem of NATO expansion in a different, somewhat broader, context. This does not mean that it has given up its plans for expanding the alliance — and there should be no illusions on that score — but this does mean that it would like to carry out this operation so as to take Russian interests into account. Many Western politicians now believe that finding a solution to the Russia-NATO problem is at least just as important as the expansion per se. At the same time, it has been debated (by Helmut Kohl, William Perry and Javier Solana at the recent forum in Munich, and earlier in the Trilateral Commission's report) that "a special relationship" could be established between NATO and Russia. Although the essence of this relationship has not been clarified, it seems that such a policy shift creates a more favorable environment for Russia and it would be a sin not to use it to pursue our own realistic initiatives concerning European security — of course, taking into account the current European realities. All the more so because Russia has insisted from the outset that relations between Russia and NATO should be special in nature. In what direction could these Russian initiatives expand?

It seems that what Russia needs is not a "special relationship" that would put balm on its great-power wounds or flatter the self esteem of its ruling elite,

but a "special relationship" that, as Chancellor Kohl put it, "could become the heart of a European security system," that is, the latter could rest on two foundations: Russia and NATO. If this is not just a declaration meant to humor Russian opponents of the expansion, then it should be legally formalized in a treaty or agreement. Logically a question arises: What should its content and essence be? Here various options can be imagined: This may be a non-aggression pact; a treaty on mutual security; an agreement on collective defense; an agreement on a strategic partnership. The choice of one form or another will depend on what both sides are seeking to achieve. Are they seeking to ensure their security against one another, given their remaining mutual distrust or to jointly insure themselves against common threats, both existing and potential? The latter is probably closer to the essence if the "special relationship" is seen as a possible foundation of European security, but the first function cannot be ruled out at the initial stage either.

For this reason this ["special relationship"] can hardly be a non-aggression pact, for that presupposes that both parties have a deep-seated desire to attack and, as history has shown, [such pacts] only serve to conceal the choice of an appropriate moment to do so. Such a treaty would hardly be in line with the current situation in Europe. The mutual security treaty means that each side reduces, by agreement and on a mutual basis, what the other side perceives as a threat to itself (arms cuts, first of all in offensive weapons, the pullout of troops from the borders, and so forth). Something similar would be useful even at this stage, but this will be not enough if it stops short of joint efforts to neutralize common threats, many of which are non-military in nature. The collective security agreement is the voluntary assumption of obligations that are not yet legally binding and have yet to be institutionalized. The OSCE is a case in point where such a common denominator was found for diverging interests that the whole organization has become ineffective. The collective defense treaty calls for an automatic joint response in the event of an attack on any member country. This is the highest form of joint security, which calls for a unification at the level of military structures. At this stage neither Russia nor NATO are ready for such a far-reaching collaboration. The strategic partnership agreement calls for cooperation to protect coinciding interests, including those in the security area, but, as a rule, it is not structurally formalized and envisions joint actions by agreement between both sides. It does not require an absolute identity of interests (the United States and Japan), an equality in potentials (the United States and Israel), or measures to ensure mutual security.

Therefore, it would be more suitable for Russia to have a "special relationship" stipulated by an agreement combining elements of mutual security and strategic partnership. The reluctance of the Russian military elite to take orders from NATO and its desire to remain the master of "its own army" can be accommodated by the fact that cooperation under the "special relationship" agreement does not call for the creation of an integrated hierarchical military organization. Moreover, Russia's participation in the Bosnian operation together with NATO has shown that this syndrome can be overcome and the collaboration itself is a realistic possibility.

At the same time the treaty should call for the existence of joint structures and mechanisms to ensure uninterrupted contacts between the two sides and measures to broaden and deepen their collaboration. They could include the establishment of a Russian permanent mission to NATO, whose head would attend weekly meetings of representatives of NATO members with a voice but no vote. During such meetings the alliance could brief the Russian government on its vision of emerging problems. At the same time, NATO would take account of Moscow's stance while making decisions that might affect Russian interests. A similar NATO mission could be accredited to the Russian Foreign or Defense Ministry and its head would have direct access to their chiefs. In the long run, the Russian defense minister and the supreme commander in chief of the Joint NATO Armed Forces in Europe could exchange their personal representatives. There should also be regular meetings at the level of defense and foreign ministers, which could be timed to coincide with the spring and winter sessions of the NATO Council, with even the Russian president or prime minister attending them if they were held at the level of heads of state. A mutually acceptable format — by setting up mixed groups — could also be found for Russian representative's participation in the operation of the Military Planning Committee, the Nuclear Planning Group, the Committee on Problems of Contemporary Society, and so forth. In the long run, joint peacekeeping forces could be created under a joint command whose operations would be authorized by the United Nations or the OSCE.

The codification of the "special relationship" would give Russia a number of advantages. First, by putting forward the proposal on concluding such an agreement and starting negotiations on the matter, Russia would snatch the initiative from the West with regard to the creation of a new European security system based on the continent's present-day realities. Second, this would render the standoff between Russia and NATO irrelevant, because the problems that emerge between them, and which affect their interests, could be resolved

in the framework of mechanisms set up for this purpose. Third, since this "special relationship" leads to the emergence of a new European security system, the question of NATO expansion becomes a marginal one, appearing in a different light: How does the expansion fit in with the new system?

This question may be resolved both ways, but in any case the interests of all sides should be heeded. If for Russia the main question is not the expansion per se, but the perceived threat to its national interests that it entails, then measures will have to be agreed upon using negotiating mechanisms to remove these threats. It seems that a Russia linked to the alliance by the "special relationship" is unlikely to be opposed to its expansion, for this will only increase the scope of this "relationship." Fourth, Russia's close dealings with key NATO structures would give it ampler opportunities to reasonably influence the alliance's policy in accordance with its interests. Evidently, NATO's opportunities to have influence on Russia would also increase, and it is important to make sure that this is positive influence. As for negative influence, neither side would tolerate it because the "special relationship" will allow Russia and NATO to remain independent entities with their own interests. Their differences will remain, too, but it is important that they will be able to bridge them within bilateral structures; that is, without pushing Russia's relations with the West to the brink of confrontation. Fifth, the contract-based "special relationship" with NATO would boost Russia's international prestige, not only in the West, but also within its immediate vicinity, and facilitate the normalization of its relations with Central and East Europe. Sixth, the treaty on the "special relationship" — should it materialize — may help stem the anti-Western tide artificially stirred by the Russian political elite. After losing such a trump it will have to turn back to domestic problems — for the benefit and greatness of Russia.

Russia: Army Commander Says NATO Exercises Threaten Russia

LD2602141696 Moscow *ITAR-TASS in English*
1347 GMT 26 Feb 96

[By Anatoliy Yurkin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, February 26 (Itar-Tass) - NATO war exercises which started in Norway on Monday jeopardise Russia's security, commander of the Russian Land Force Colonel General Vladimir Semenov said.

Because of war games on the territory of an adjacent state, part of Russian troops will be put on alert and

instructed to have a close watch on the situation, Semenov said.

Up to 7,000 soldiers and officers are taking part in the land force games, including 1,900 German servicemen. The troops are part of NATO's rapid reaction force. The games are likely to last till mid-march, he said.

NATO troop transportation to neighbouring Norwegian districts for training in arctic conditions makes Russia take adequate measures in case of further tensions in the Russian zone of the Arctic Circle, he said.

According to the general, NATO is simultaneously staging naval exercises with more than 40 war ships, as well as landing units, in Norway's Arctic Circle. The games are expected to last until March, he said.

General Semenov said he was puzzled by both the type and the location of the games. Western military circles keep on thinking the way they did during the "cold war", which is damaging to European security, he said.

Russia: START Ratification Said Hampered by U.S. Attitudes

LD2702114196 Moscow *ITAR-TASS World Service*
in Russian 1007 GMT 27 Feb 96

[By *ITAR-TASS* parliamentary correspondent Ivan Novikov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 27 Feb — Lev Rokhlin, chairman of the State Duma's Defense Committee, believes that the Russian-U.S. Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START-II) "can be ratified by the Russian side only if there is an appropriate correlation of forces." "The president's message to the Federal Assembly voices concern that NATO is heading toward the East, towards the borders of Russia and parliamentarians share this concern fully," he told an *ITAR-TASS* correspondent today when asked about the prospects for the ratification of this agreement which is now being examined by the Russian parliament.

In Lev Rokhlin's view, the fact that there are influential forces in the United States that are insisting on the resumption of work into antimissile defense does not make the Russian side optimistic either. According to Lev Rokhlin, the United States is also increasing conventional weapons, indeed the United States has already overtaken Russia here, he said. "We have to be sure that by signing START-II we are not destroying ourselves," the chairman of the Duma Defense Committee said.

Lev Rokhlin believes that in a situation where the military potential of NATO countries is increasing sharply in comparison with Russia's, the build-up of conventional weapons by the U.S. side is dangerous. "I

hope that President Boris Yeltsin will bear these new factors in mind and will take steps to strengthen the country's defense capability," the general noted.

Lev Rokhlin believes that the government needs to present to parliament a blueprint for the development of nuclear deterrence as well as proof that START-II is fully in line with Russian interests.

Russia: Kohl, Clinton Endorsement of Yeltsin Could Be 'Disservice'

MM2602144496 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian
24 Feb 96 p 1

[Article by political observer Richard Ovinnikov: "Giving Lessons in New Etiquette"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the past few days Russians have been treated to a free and extremely instructive show. Its main protagonists are from abroad.

FRG Chancellor Kohl's visit to our country has just ended. Was the purpose of the trip to resolve some urgent bilateral or international questions? Nothing of the sort. If anything was discussed in the Kremlin nothing was decided, according to reports. But that was not the point of the visit. It turns out that the German chancellor came to Russia itself because he wanted to really impress on us his strong preference for the sole candidate as the new Russian president. Hardly had this foreign leader left our country that there was a call from President Clinton in Washington. The conversation, this time by telephone, left the same dry after-taste. The U.S. President, you see, seemed to be advising our voters to elect the same much-loved candidate.

The current visit to Moscow by IMF Executive Director Michel Camdessus to announce the opening up of a loan of more than \$10 billion to Russia was no coincidence, either. "One cannot help suspecting that the \$10 billion is the Western countries' contribution to Yeltsin's election campaign," the BBC commented. You cannot put it any clearer than that....

The Russian Federation has now been placed in an unenviable position. Usually state leaders have a stock reply ready for the tricky but standard question of which contender for the presidency or premiership of a given country they prefer. In a diplomatic and cultured way they reply: We will work with whomever your people elect. And when they pay a personal visit to a country which is facing elections, the heads of foreign states or governments tactfully and far-sightedly make contact, one way or another, with all the main contenders. This, as it were, is the basis of equitable interstate relations.

It seems that now they want to teach us a lesson in new state etiquette. Not only can you blow kisses from

abroad or deliver them in person to the sole contender, it is also possible to openly recommend his election to the dim-witted people of another country.

If you imagine this situation in reverse you can see how extraordinary this conduct is. Just imagine the fuss that would be made in the United States if someone in Russia publicly told the Americans that they ought to elect the Democrat Clinton in the forthcoming U.S. presidential elections rather than any of the Republicans. Of if, during a visit to Germany in election year, an eminent foreign guest ostentatiously refused to meet with the main opposition candidates. There is no doubt that in both instances there would inevitably be talk of intolerable gross interference in the internal affairs of the state in question. There is also the question of the impact of such an attempt at foreign involvement in someone else's elections.

However, it is permissible to issue such instructions to Russia. The reason is clear. In the eyes of some Western figures the Russian Federation is clearly no longer regarded as a country whose people's will must be respected in elections. On the contrary, they do not consider it shameful to get involved in our affairs as they would do in those of dependent territories. And, what is more, in such a crucial affair as the question of power.

There is a reverse side to this situation. A candidate so persistently foisted on the Russians from abroad will hardly be perceived as someone who safeguards national interests. So, on closer examination, all this foreign encouragement could prove to be a disservice.

Russia: Karasin: Russia 'Regrets' Death of U.S. Pilots Over Cuba

LD2602141496 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1302 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 26 (Interfax) — Russia regrets the incident where American planes were downed by Cubans last weekend, Russian foreign ministry spokesman Grigoriy Karasin said.

"In particular, we regret the loss of human life," he said in an interview with Interfax Monday. Moscow insists on the release of all essential data related to the incident, he added. "It also insists on hearing the Cuban side, too," Karasin said.

Cuba has made the information available, and "its data has to be taken into account," Karasin said, wondering about the purpose of such flights over Cuba.

"Obviously, concrete measures have to be adopted above all by the Americans to prevent deliberate vi-

olations of Cuba's air space from becoming a provoking factor", Karasin emphasized. "Russia's ambassador to the U.N. Security Council, Sergey Lavrov, has quite explicit instructions on this score and is actively working with the Security Council," Karasin said.

Russia: Zhirinovskiy Congratulates Castro on 'Victory' Over U.S.

LD2602232696 Moscow INTERFAX in English
2317 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 26 (Interfax) — Chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) Vladimir Zhirinovskiy has congratulated Cuban leader Fidel Castro "on another victory over American carrion-crows," the LDPR press service told Interfax Monday [26 February].

Last weekend the Cuban Military Air Forces shot down two U.S. planes belonging to a Cuban emigrant organization which, as Havana claims, have violated Cuban air space.

"We are proud that this exploit was performed" using Russian-made fighters, Zhirinovskiy said.

Zhirinovskiy promised that in the event of his election as Russian president, Cuba "will have no difficulties in acquiring high-quality arms."

Zhirinovskiy said he would leave for Libya on February 29 at the invitation of Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi. "I hope that the time will come when we — Colonel al-Qadhdhafi, South African President Nelson Mandela, you, glorious Fidel, and myself - will gather around one table and will be able to discuss further measures to counteract the American dictate," Zhirinovskiy said in a message to Castro.

Russia: U.S. Military Response to Cuban Incident 'Not Ruled Out'

MM2602151296 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian
27 Feb 96 pp 1, 3

[Report by Vladimir Nadein: "United States Does Not Rule Out Invasion of Cuba. By Shooting Down Two Civilian Planes Castro Has Provoked an Acute Crisis"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Washington — On Saturday afternoon, Cuban Air Force MiG-29 jet fighters shot down two unarmed Cessna light aircraft with air-to-air missiles. The pilots, U.S. citizens, were killed. The Cuban Foreign Ministry has issued a statement claiming that the planes had invaded the country's airspace. The United States insists that the two Cessnas were shot down over international waters.

Secretary of State W. Christopher, addressing journalists at the White House immediately after a three-hour session with President B. Clinton at which the latest Cuban crisis was discussed, said that the United States is insisting on the urgent convening of the UN Security Council. At the same time the secretary of state did not rule out the possibility of unilateral U.S. actions against Cuba. Christopher described the actions of Castro's air force as a "shameless violation of international law and a violation of civilized standards of behavior." [passage omitted]

The U.S. authorities believe that the two Cessnas were attacked a few miles outside Cuban airspace. [passage omitted]

The UN Security Council adopted no decisions. The council members need more precise and detailed information.

The White House session also ended without results. Among the measures being discussed by the administration by way of response to Cuba's actions are a ban on sending money to Cuba, the cessation of cultural exchanges, the cancellation of all passenger flights from U.S. territory, and a stricter economic blockade.

The United States has maintained a regime of strict trade embargo against Cuba for three decades now. But Havana trades freely with Europe and with many Central and South American countries.

One representative of the administration told representatives of the press that military operations against Cuba in the next few days are unlikely. However, U.S. President Clinton, according to another official, is studying all possibilities, without ruling anything out.

In the opinion of many experts, the exacerbation of Cuban-U.S. relations is directly in the interests of Fidel Castro, whose regime only feels comfortable in an atmosphere of hostility, intransigence, and siege.

Russia: Cuban Envoy Briefs Media on U.S.-Cuban Air Incident

LD2602104996 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1700 GMT 26 Feb 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Carlos Palmorola, Cuban ambassador in Russia, met the media today and said that he did not know who gave the order to down the two Cessna aircraft, but added that any Cuban would have been prepared to give such an order. The downed aircraft fell five miles off the Cuban coast, while the air border is 12 miles off. Unless the trajectory of the fall was not very long, the ambassador believes

that this shows that the aircraft were not downed over international waters. Mr. Palmorola even questioned the fact that the aircraft were civilian ones.

[Begin recording] [Palmorola in Vernacular with superimposed Russian translation] In 1961, before the counter-revolutionaries landed at Playa Giron, such aircraft used to drop grenades. Today they are dropping leaflets, but who knows what they are going to drop tomorrow. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Russia: Primakov On East Europe as Foreign Policy Priority

LD2602185096 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1738 GMT 26 Feb 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 26 (Interfax) - Eastern Europe is a priority of Russia's foreign policy, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov told Interfax Monday, answering questions on his talks with his Bulgarian counterpart, Georgy Pirinski, last weekend.

East European countries are situated closely around Russia, Primakov said. "Our states used to have good relations during the Cold War, and now we must do our best to ensure such relations develop into the future," he said.

Eastern Europe is also of great importance for Russia, because many countries of this region applied for NATO membership, he said.

"We cannot and we will not veto this or that decision by the countries of this region," Primakov said. "However, we would like to prove, as we develop our relations, that absolutely nothing endangers these states, that they may be perfectly safe not joining any alliances."

Speaking on other priorities of Russia's foreign policy, Primakov named "relations with the CIS, United States, Western Europe, Asia and other regions."

"This is not contradictory; Russia must show activity in all directions," Primakov said. "This is an attribute of the foreign policy of a great power such as Russia. In addition, this is dictated by our national interests," he said.

Speaking on Russian-Bulgarian relations, Primakov called them "advanced."

He said his talks with Pirinski had proved once again that the two countries approached virtually all issues "either closely or equally." He also said the two countries' interests matched on many issues.

For his part, Pirinski expressed satisfaction with the results of the talks, calling them "concrete and promising."

According to Pirinski, both sides agreed on the need to build such a system for European security that would completely exclude confrontation and new divisions.

Pirinski said he had briefed Primakov on his country's initiative to convoke a meeting of foreign ministers of "all the Balkan countries without exception, including Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Greece, Macedonia, Rumania, Slovenia, Turkey, Croatia and Yugoslavia."

The meeting should discuss the promotion of the full implementation of the Dayton peace accord and the coordination of possible actions to develop cooperation in the Balkans as a whole, Pirinski said.

He specified that by such cooperation he meant a whole complex of economic, political and cultural activities, including cooperation in the legal, humanitarian and social areas.

Primakov said Moscow "regarded this initiative with much interest."

According to a press release published by the Russian Foreign Ministry, the two ministers "stressed the importance of the full implementation of the comprehensive Bosnian peace accord signed in Paris by all sides."

Primakov and Pirinski also stressed the need for intensive activities to economically restore and develop both the conflict area and the region as a whole.

Discussing bilateral relations, the two sides expressed satisfaction with the progress achieved in the creation of a new legal basis for cooperation. "Since 1991, Russia and Bulgaria have signed over 50 intergovernmental and interbranch agreements in various areas," according to the press release.

The two ministers also showed interest in "continuing the active participation in the Danube affairs."

Primakov accepted Pirinski's invitation to pay an official visit to Bulgaria "any time he finds convenient."

Russia: Primakov News Conference on Kazakhstan Talks

MM2702115196 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA
in Russian 27 Feb 96 p 3

[Report by Anatoliy Ladin: "The Time for Close-at-Hand Problems Has Also Come"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Russian Federation Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov's visit to Almaty and then

to Tashkent is being seen by many observers as a serious shift by Moscow in the direction of Commonwealth problems. This was also confirmed by the minister himself, who, together with his counterpart Kasymzhomart Tokayev, head of the Kazakhstan foreign policy department, held a news conference at the end of the Russian-Kazakhstani talks.

Russia regards the CIS countries as equal partners, Yevgeniy Primakov stressed. The integration processes on which Russia, Kazakhstan, and other Commonwealth countries alike are pinning their hopes will develop only on a voluntary basis. And documents submitted by Kazakhstan on deepening integration processes were examined during the talks held with Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

On the subject of the range of problems linked with the situation in Tajikistan, they were the subject of what Primakov called a detailed discussion with K. Tokayev. It was stressed that in their joint view the government side has recently taken a number of constructive steps to achieve accord in the inter-Tajik conflict but, fortunately, the opposition has not responded appropriately and moreover cut short the talks in Ashkhabad.

Answering a KRASNAYA ZVEZDA correspondent's question about the peacemaking mission being performed by Russia and other Commonwealth countries in Tajikistan, Yevgeniy Primakov noted that the talks with the president of Kazakhstan had confirmed that the Russian and Kazakhstani sides' positions on the Tajik problem are in agreement. The presence of the collective peacekeeping forces in Tajikistan is necessitated by the prevention of chaos in the country as a result of actions by opposition forces from outside, from Afghan territory.

Russia: 'Differences' With Kazakhstan Over Caspian Problem

MM2602131896 *Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA*
in Russian 24 Feb 96 p 7

[Report by Yuriy Kirinitsianov: "The Caspian Cannot Divide Us"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Almaty — At meetings with the leadership of Kazakhstan and at the final press conference in Almaty, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov admitted that the two sides have their differences as regards solving the Caspian problem. However, these are not so serious as to cast doubts about the need for integration between the countries.

The Customs Union has started working, albeit not without hiccups, and the formation (more accurately the re-formation) of a single energy and transportation

system is on the way. The signing of documents on a payments union is being prepared, and cooperation in the humanitarian sphere is planned. A political decision on these documents will obviously be adopted in April, when Boris Yeltsin visits the capital of Kazakhstan.

But bad luck is dogging the Caspian. Kazakhstan is in favor of all of the littoral states forming sovereign zones, in which all economic activity would be regulated only by that country's laws. (Kazakhstan proposes, Azerbaijan disposes. By setting up its rigs far out at sea, it has in fact implemented its sovereignty over part of the Caspian). But Russia believes that all of the littoral states should have equal rights, including the right of veto over any unilateral actions. Kazakhstan is wittily observing that the "hare" and the "bear" cannot have equal rights. Each of them should have his own "quarters."

Curiously Kazakhstan, which is usually sensitive to signals from Moscow, is being resolute this time. Most likely this is because it quite simply has no alternative. The Caspian shelf represents a real opportunity to get out of a crisis which the republic has been unable to overcome at all.

Russia: Official on Establishing Trade Ties With Bosnian Serbs

LD2602174796 *Moscow INTERFAX in English*
1657 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 26 (Interfax) — Direct trade and economic contacts between Russia and the [Bosnian] Serb Republic can be established only after the visit of a delegation of the Bosnian Serb leadership to Moscow in mid-March, a spokesman for the Russian Ministry for Foreign Economic Relations told Interfax on Monday.

Commenting on Yeltsin's decision of February 23 to suspend sanctions against the Serb Republic, experts note that this to a certain extent anticipates the events in its economic part, since Moscow did not have direct trade relations with Bosnian Serbs. Business contacts were carried out with Bosnia-Herzegovina as a whole, of which the Serb Republic is a part.

Experts believe that fully-fledged trade and economic exchanges between Moscow and Bosnian Serbs can be established after the final formation of power structures of the Serb Republic and the signing of bilateral intergovernmental agreements on concrete spheres of cooperation.

According to expert forecasts, trade and economic relations between Moscow and Pale can become a reality not earlier than in autumn.

Political Issues

Russia: Yeltsin Backs Belgorod Economic Experiment

MM2602153696 Moscow SELSKAYA ZHIZN
in Russian 24 Feb 96 p 1

[Editorial office announcement incorporating undated letter from Russian President Boris Yeltsin to V.S. Chernomyrdin, Ye.G. Yasin, V.G. Panskov, and Ye. V. Basin: "Belgorod Experiment. Competition To Get Into Top Ten Agribusiness Trailblazers"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Today is the day of our competition announcement — about a new economic mechanism which is to be used in Belgorod Oblast. The idea behind it is simple and, despite the certain similarity to the famous Nizhniy Novgorod method, is an alternative to it in reviving a strong owner in the countryside and in our view is more natural and completely painless for the peasant. Here the means of production are not divided but private ownership is revived on the basis of a peasant homestead and private farm.

The project's implementation will make it possible to create in rural areas completely new social and production structures which are based on private enterprise. [passage omitted]

The Foundation for the Support of Individual Housing Construction in the Countryside, which was set up under the oblast administration, is busy implementing the project.

Its successful work has received support from Russian President B.N. Yeltsin, who has sent the following document to a number of leaders:

"To V.S. Chernomyrdin, Ye.G. Yasin, V.G. Panskov, and Ye. V. Basin

"I believe that the Belgorod experiment, which was well thought out and which is being successfully implemented, is not only an example of the real quest for a way of improving people's housing conditions but also combines the interests of rural commodity producers and the population as a whole.

"This experience can only be welcomed.

"I believe that the request by the oblast leadership and Construction Ministry must be supported so that it can be deepened and a methodology elaborated for possible application throughout Russia.

"[Signed] B. Yeltsin

"Report."

On the government's recommendation the Belgorod inhabitants' experience is already being applied in Belgorod Oblast, and in some other Russian regions it is also at the assimilation stage.

Russia: Yeltsin Appoints New Deputy Foreign Minister

LD2602205296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English
2048 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, February 26 (ITAR-TASS) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed a decree on Monday appointing Ivan Kuznetsov as deputy foreign minister.

The decree comes into effect as of the date of signature, the presidential press service said.

Russia: Deputies Comment on Yeltsin's Address

LD2302205296 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1831 GMT 23 Feb 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Senate Speaker Yegor Stroyev described the address as being overall constructive and realistic.

In an INTERFAX interview on Friday, he said Yeltsin was outspoken about all painful issues worrying every Russian.

The speaker called "fresh" Yeltsin's ideas about the government's role in running the country and competence.

He said it was very important that the question of rampant crime was reflected in the president's address. Nothing short of fighting against "this social evil", said Stroyev, can help the government assert itself and law and order in the country.

The speaker described as constructive part of the address intended for political parties. "Clearly, Boris Yeltsin has shown he is ready for dialogue", the speaker said. His own impression is Yeltsin is prepared for discussion of crying issues with the leaders of various parties and movements and for constructive engagement for the good of the country and the people.

State Duma Speaker Gennadiy Seleznev in turn said many parts of the address and the assessments Yeltsin made "coincide with opposition assessments, constantly given by the leader of the Russian Communist party."

These include Yeltsin's assessments of the social and economic standing of Russians and the drive against crime and corruption. He also spoke of identity of views on the need for consolidating Russia's relations with other CIS states and promote federal relations.

However, the speaker disagrees with Yeltsin's assertion about signs of economic stabilization, something that "we do not see happen yet."

He described as vague parts of the address dealing with a Chechen settlement. "Everyone expected him to unveil a coherent peace plan, but sadly, this did not happen," Seleznev said.

Leader of the Russian Communist party Gennadiy Zyuganov said the president had failed to offer any cure for leading the country out of crisis.

He said the Yeltsin address "has reaffirmed the gloomiest fears" of the Communist-led opposition. Zyuganov accused the president of "populism and a lack of elementary logics" saying the speech did not contain any critical assessment of the internal situation or concrete figures about Russia's economic standing.

He described the address as being more of a ritual saying parts of the speech duplicated communist party documents of three years ago.

Leader of the Duma's People Power faction Nikolay Ryzhkov has given bad marks to Yeltsin's annual address. "My own impression is that we saw a man who had been out of the country for a long time, and suddenly saw what was happening here," he said.

He was skeptical about parts of the address dealing with economic reforms and a Chechen settlement. "We have not heard exactly in which way the president is going to resolve the Chechen problem," Ryzhkov said. And he added if the president's address was meant to be seen as Yeltsin's election platform, it must be admitted "it was very weak, indeed."

Former Duma Speaker Ivan Rybkin called the president's address "the prelude to a tough presidential drive in which there will be no mercy for the government, law enforcement bodies, regional governors or corrupt officials."

Rybkin said he was always opposed to any emergencies, but sensible demands combined with high responsibility "is always needed."

At the same time he expressed fears about a possible rolling of heads, some of them innocent.

Member of parliament Ramazan Abdulatipov of Dagestan declined to comment on the presidential address saying it must be carefully examined. At the same time he was disappointed over Yeltsin's failure to provide a coherent answer to how to resolve the Chechen crisis.

He said the president was putting Chechen rebel leader Dzhokhar Dudayev outside the brackets of peace talks. He said Dudayev could be excluded from political

talks, but the military-political issues would have to be discussed with both Dudayev and pro-Moscow Chechen leader Doku Zavgayev.

One other Duma deputy Boris Fedorov of the Russian Regions faction said all of what Yeltsin said was absolutely true.

But he called on the president to match word to deed. Fedorov said if the president went on sacking saboteur officials, there was the chance of an entirely new situation being formed in the country.

Fedorov said if the president "complies with what he said," the democrats would have no other choice but to back Yeltsin at presidential elections. If not, Russia will face another revolution which will take another ten years to defuse, he believes.

Fedorov expressed regret that no one in the conference hall was lending an ear to what the president had to say.

Independent MP Sergey Kovalev described the address as a cocktail made up of populist slogans, correct words and lies.

Vladimir Lukin of the Yabloko faction said the speech contained many correct words, but the president appeared to be in the face of a daunting job of making it both critical and honest, and yet optimistic. He said this two-fold task is hard to carry out.

He expressed regret that the president's speech contained no coherent plan of action needed to carry out reforms.

Leader of the Yabloko faction Grigoriy Yavlinskiy said the speech did not provide answers to any of the key issues.

Yavlinskiy he did not even bother to attend the session because he did not expect to hear anything new. He said that everyone was indifferent to this year's address while the president's earlier promises, as Yeltsin put it himself, remained undelivered.

Russia: Yeltsin Aide Views Candidates' Election Chances

MM2602194596 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 27 Feb 96 p 1

[Interview with Professor Georgiy Satarov, aide to the Russian president for political questions, by RIA-NOVOSTI political commentator Aleksandr Nadzharov specially for ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI; place and date not given: "Don't Confuse Real Chances With Imaginary Ratings"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Professor Georgiy Satarov, aide to the Russian president for political questions, believes

that today's ratings of the contenders for the post of head of state do not fully reflect the true state of affairs.

But at the moment they paint a picture that is highly unpleasant for the Kremlin. According to the latest figures, Gennadiy Zyuganov, leader of the Communist Party, which was victorious in December's parliamentary elections, would obtain approximately 18 percent of the vote if the presidential election was held in the last week of February. Boris Yeltsin, who, according to the same figures, has by that time moved only from fifth to third place, could count on 9 percent.

[Satarov] All that is true, but it is primarily the dynamics of the changing figures that should be taken into account: Since August the president's rating has been constantly rising, and according to my figures that rise will accelerate. Consequently, what Zyuganov has right now is his peak. Whereas Yeltsin is on an upswing in popularity with the voters.

[Nadzharov] Is that what prompted the Russian president to run for a second term?

[Satarov] No. He explained his motives among the inner circle a year ago, and confirmed them the other day when presenting his annual Message to the Federal Assembly. His decision, the president stated, was determined by the presence or absence of a threat to the Russian reforms.

[Nadzharov] But Boris Yeltsin's critics claim that the most important thing for him is power itself.

[Satarov] That is not in his nature. In general he rarely takes offense, but he takes offense at that more than anything. Because he has demonstrated with his whole career that in fact it is not like that at all. Suffice it to recall the now forgotten 1987 CPSU Central Committee Plenum, prior to which it had been decided to bring him into the inner circle of what was then the USSR's top leadership — as a member of the Politburo of the all-powerful Communist Party. However, Yeltsin then delivered such a speech that the scandalized "party comrades" removed him from all his posts. Later still, as head of democratic Russia in 1991 and 1993, he was granted opportunities dramatically to increase his own power. Nonetheless he did not do it. Yeltsin is a man with a conscious sense of his own mission. That, and not power, is his priority. So he made the decision to put forward his candidacy for a second term solely on the basis of these considerations: The transformations are not yet complete, they must be taken further. But real threats do exist to the democratic reforms in Russia. That being so, he has a duty, come what may, to put forward his candidacy, to win, and to continue his course.

[Nadzharov] How do you assess the chances of Yeltsin and his rivals in the presidential election scheduled for June?

[Satarov] Different researchers are publishing figures according to which, in the popularity rating, the president comes anywhere from second to fifth. But certain experts estimate Yeltsin's and Zyuganov's chances as being 50-50. Here, I repeat, the president is at the beginning of the "takeoff" stage, so to speak. This is a very important point. So if the president retains his present head of steam — and I think he will — he will have sufficiently high chances of becoming head of state again.

Now for the other candidates. The Communists have the biggest chances among them. If I was to try to put the contenders in order, after that would come Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, and General Aleksandr Lebed.

[Nadzharov] And what if we started talking about possible pairings? Say, Yeltsin for president and Yavlinskiy for prime minister?

[Satarov] That cannot be ruled out. But it is, of course, premature as yet to speak about such a combination as a reality.

[Nadzharov] Does the president consider it necessary to make any adjustment to his policy?

[Satarov] The need for such adjustment is spoken of in the president's Message to the Federal Assembly. For instance, after the start of the democratic reforms in Russia certain specific and, I would say, parasitic forms of economic activity sprang up. As side effects of the period of initial accumulation of capital. One of the phenomena that should be resisted is the "circulation" of budget money in commercial banks for profit — the resale of that money. This is instead of honestly passing the money on to whoever it was intended for. The authorities had not previously paid attention to this practice of making easy money out of money in a way that is harmful to the state — until the limpets were clinging all over the ship's hull.

The second area is changing budget policy. That requires several conditions: financial stabilization; efficient fulfillment of the income side of the budget — that is, receipt of all taxes; reduction of state expenditure on supporting inefficient enterprises; and a whole series of other measures making it possible to restructure the budget in a social direction. This means health care, culture, education, and fundamental science.

But Russia's main resource is the imposition of elementary order: strict implementation of the existing laws,

and administrative measures to force state officials to do so.

[Nadzharov] What prevented this from being done earlier?

[Satarov] It was impossible to do it earlier because the state was still rather weak. Now the situation is different. The president has stated openly that there can be no question of any deviations from the course of reforms. In particular, a guide figure has been set in the economy — 25-percent inflation this year, as compared with threefold inflation last year and tenfold earlier. The main thing is to create on this basis conditions such that entrepreneurs will find it advantageous to channel funds into production, rather than into making money out of money.

Russia: Soskovets Interviewed on Yeltsin Campaign

LD2702120096 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1118 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 27 (INTERFAX) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin's re-election platform should rest on more socially-oriented economic reforms, stable society, strong statehood, and an anti-crime campaign, Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets, in charge of the Coordinating Presidential Elections Council, declared in an interview with INTERFAX today.

"The main problem is to unite reformists and democrats around the candidacy of President Yeltsin," Soskovets said, adding that since "the outcome of presidential elections will be crucial to the fate of the country, personal ambitions and insults should be put aside."

The coordinating council will keep all initiative groups together and will be in touch with the local committees being set up to support Yeltsin's re-election for a second term. "Thus all regions will be involved in this public work," Soskovets said.

The experience of the December 1995 parliamentary elections is being taken into account in the current election campaign, Soskovets declared, warning against "losing the initiative in the pre-election period" and stressing the need "to work more actively with media, be as open as possible and be ready to promptly respond to all changes in the situation."

"Openness, honesty, and initiative are the weapons for the current Russian president to win," Soskovets said.

Reporting that the collection of signatures in support of Yeltsin's candidacy is nearing completion, Soskovets voiced confidence that Yeltsin will be re-elected since "over the years of reform, despite the difficulties of

building new socioeconomic relations, people have felt the advantages given by life and work in market economy conditions."

Russia: Initiative Group Urges Movement To Support Yeltsin

LD2602231796 Moscow INTERFAX in English
2225 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 26 (INTERFAX) — An initiative group organizing a public movement in support of Russian President Boris Yeltsin has called for the formation of an All-Russian movement in his support at the June 16 presidential elections.

"Our hope for Russia's renewal and for the creation of a society in which everybody can live in a fitting manner is connected with President Boris Yeltsin's policy," says an address by the initiative group to "citizens of free Russia" handed to INTERFAX Monday. "It is important to understand this. It is necessary to unite the efforts of all reform minded, democratic forces for this purpose."

Authors of this document recognize that the last four years were a difficult period for the country, "probably one of the most difficult ones in the history of the fatherland."

"But the main thing was achieved. Russia has avoided the collapse of the state, economic collapse, the most rapid civil war. The country is overcoming difficulties. The economic rise is acquiring a stable nature and Russians cannot but notice this."

"Victory over the coup attempt, adoption of the Russian Constitution, creation of democratic grounds, development of economic reforms, strengthening of regions' role, establishing of freedom of word and press, and recognition of Russia as a member of the world community are among Yeltsin's achievements, authors of this document believe.

The initiative group proposes to hold conferences of regional public movements in Yeltsin's support, a congress of creative, professional unions and public associations, and to work out joint guidelines for the future president. It is also necessary to hold a congress to create an All-Russian public movement in support of President Yeltsin.

Sergey Filatov, Vladimir Shumeyko, Sergey Belyayev, Ivan Rybkin, Yuriy Petrov, Andrey Nuykin, Yekaterina Lakhova, Mark Zakharov are among 56 functionaries who signed the address of the initiative group. INTERFAX has at its disposal the whole text of the address of the initiative group organizing public movement in support of President Boris Yeltsin.

**Russia: Gaydar Views Yeltsin, Yavlinskiy
Candidacy Problems**

LD2602190796 Moscow NTV in Russian
1600 GMT 26 Feb 96

[Report over video on news conference given by Russia's Democratic Choice Chairman Yegor Gaydar in Moscow on 26 February, including recorded segments of Gaydar remarks — from the "Segodnya" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] Two days after the plenum of the council of Russia's Democratic Choice was held, its chairman Yegor Gaydar held a news conference today.

He is continuing to hold consultations with democratically orientated political organizations for the sake of forming a powerful coalition capable of standing up against the communists. At the same time, his party has not yet made a specific choice on whom it should give its votes to, although it is clear, and Gaydar himself is not hiding this, that Yeltsin or Yavlinskiy are at issue. According to the chairman of Russia's Democratic Choice, neither of the candidates can be called the best, but compared with Zyuganov, they are a lesser evil.

[Gaydar] It seems to us that neither Yeltsin nor Yavlinskiy are ideal candidates to stand against Zyuganov. For various reasons, a great many of our fellow thinkers have decided for themselves that they won't vote for either of them under any circumstances, unfortunately. Nevertheless, this is how life is and we are forced to act in these circumstances and not in any others. And these are the circumstances in which we have to work and take decisions.

[Correspondent] Everything depends upon the actions of the candidates over the next few months. As for Yavlinskiy, Gaydar said that until Yabloko clarifies its position with regard to the communists, that is, officially announces that it refuses to cooperate with them and also strikes out of its preelection platform questions which may have a negative affect on the economy of the state, Russia's Democratic Choice does not see itself forming a coalition with this association. He also ruled out the possibility of joining a new cabinet of ministers should Yeltsin win. However, this does not mean that Russia's Democratic Choice is refusing to speak to the Kremlin.

[Gaydar] We are ready for dialogue with the party of power. We are ready for dialogue with Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin. The situation is such that we simply cannot allow ourselves not to hold such a dialogue. But then, what is extremely important for us is what the party of power intends to do in the months before the elections to prepare for such a dialogue. What personnel decisions will it take? Is Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin

ready to rid himself at least of the most odious figures who are quite obviously compromising him?

[Correspondent] Gaydar considers people like Grachev, presidential administration head Nikolay Yegorov, and Russia's counterintelligence chief Barsukov, to be odious. In the opinion of Yegor Timurovich, the latter should answer for the events in Pervomayskoye.

Gaydar unequivocally replied "no" to questions about his own participation in the forthcoming elections despite the fact that some party colleagues wanted to register him as a candidate. As a good politician, Gaydar of course did not speak of his chances, probably considering them to be absolute and only noting that such a step would alienate the democratic camp even more and would increase the communists' chances of success. It is precisely this which Gaydar fears, for the priority task of Russia's Democratic Choice remains not to allow a repeat of the communist experiment in the country.

Andrey Cherkassov, Aleksandr Savonin, NTV, Moscow. [video shows news conference by Yegor Gaydar]

**Russia: Zyuganov Views State Council, Shadow
Cabinet Plans**

AU2302203796 Bratislava PRAVDA in Slovak
21 Feb 96 pp 1, 10

[Interview with Gennadiy Zyuganov, chairman of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, by Felix Alexejev in Moscow; date not given: "Government of Incompetent Communists Would Be No Victory, G. Zyuganov Tells PRAVDA"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The atmosphere in the offices of the deputies' club of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation [CPRF] in the State Duma building in Moscow is an optimistic, working one. Everything is going according to plan. One of the set targets — victory in the parliamentary elections — was achieved by the Communists in December. Right now, everything is subordinated to task No. Two — triumph of the CPRF's candidate in the June presidential elections. Public opinion polls show that the CPRF's chief, Gennadiy Zyuganov, maintains the by far highest electoral preferences. Last Thursday [15 February], he was officially nominated by the party's national conference.

[Alexejev] Now that you have been officially nominated as presidential candidate, do you intend to set up a shadow cabinet?

[Zyuganov] Almost 20 million voters gave us their votes in the December elections. In the presidential elections

we expect even stronger support. We have our action program and a competent team capable of implementing this program. Personally, I seek the formation of a State Council — it could also be called National Council — that would comprise representatives of leading political forces ready to rally around a program for Russia's renewal.

This Council could consider the variants of various programs, draft a common platform, and propose the composition of a shadow cabinet. The shadow cabinet should be composed chiefly on the basis of its members' professional orientation. It should be made up of people capable of managing work in individual sections and of supervising entire departments. I can reveal to you today that, on the eve of our party conference, we organized two large consultative meetings. The leaders of leading political groups spent hours assessing the actual situation in the country, the distribution of political forces, and possible combinations of government formation. Our initiative is becoming acceptable to all kinds of political forces. Another consultative meeting on the same topic will take place in the nearest future.

[Alexejev] What should be the tasks of the shadow cabinet?

[Zyuganov] Today every responsible government, and this applies to the shadow cabinet as well, must proceed from the real situation and adopt measures that brook no delay — measures to stabilize the economy, measures in the interest of combating crime and preserving that which safeguards the country's future — science, education, culture, protection of health.

[Alexejev] You have repeatedly criticized the presidential system and articles of the Constitution that give the president virtually unlimited powers. Have you changed these views by joining the battle for the presidential seat?

[Zyuganov] I want to stress that, personally, I am still a resolute advocate of curtailing presidential self-rule. One of the instruments of bringing this about could be the representative State Council, through which all the most important ideas concerning the implementation of reform would pass.

[Alexejev] Panic set it among of civil servants. Many of them are desperately looking in their drawers for their old party membership cards, to dust them off in time before the Communists return.

[Zyuganov] I would like to tell them that they need not rush to register in party organizations. Those capable of working and managing professionally and of honorably meeting their tasks can keep their jobs. No one will ask them to display their party membership card. If

the person in question is incapable of organizing public transport or securing faultless telephone communications, no party card will help him. If incapable Communists or agrarians were to take over power after thievish democrats, it would be no victory for the country.

Russia: NDR Canvassing in Army Seen as Violation
MM2302151196 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian
21 Feb 96 p 1

[Article by Doctor of Military Sciences, Colonel (retired), Professor Ivan Sorokin: "How the Army Is Being Bought"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Leningrad — The Army, its enlisted men, officers, and generals are a section of the people without whom it is powerless. The people bring the Army up to strength with their sons and daughters, they arm, clothe, and feed the Army, and they nurture it with their ideas and attitudes. For this reason alone the Army has a duty to listen to the people's voice. From this it becomes clear that the Army and the people have roughly the same reaction to various events in the life of the country.

In spite of the fact that it is more and better organized than the people as a whole, the Army may manifest results that are only a little bit different in one direction or another from those of the nation as a whole in various major campaigns at the federation-wide level. However, if these results differ radically from the norm, then we are clearly witnessing here an abnormal situation and maybe even wayward behavior.

We all remember the 1993 elections when Reserve Captain V.V. Zhirinovskiy "ran down" the cantonment gates in his "tank," made his well-known appeal to the military units..., and the Army showed a preference for him. The other blocs and parties were unable to get through to the troops and did not win the support of servicemen.

The federal leadership grasped that it was possible to use the Army for its own purposes and in 1995 decided to gain the support of this large group for the "party of power" — Russia Is Our Home [NDR]. To this end just before the elections P. Grachev was tossed the trillions that were necessary to pay unpaid wages and pensions and fund construction work, economic, and other requirements, which enabled the defense minister to disguise the government's real intention of winning over the troops to vote "for the right candidates." Then there immediately appeared the well-known statement saying that, now that the government had settled its bills with the Army, the generals in the provinces should know for whom they should vote.

The generals did not let their minister down. They not only knew what to do, but also managed to carry out the task they had been set: They simply prevented representatives of any parties and public organizations, apart, of course, from the NDR, from gaining access to military units, institutions, and establishments. They managed to silence anyone who dared to call on servicemen to be democratic in the true meaning of the word: They closed the doors on outsiders. They gave their men the order to vote in the following manner: "Find 'Home' on the slip and put a cross beside it — that is what you should do."

The cases of blatant violation of election law are evidence of how the generals in Leningrad Military District tried to carry out the defense minister's instructions. A month before the elections, the author of this piece was invited to his unit for Missile and Artillery Forces Day. A veteran of the Great Patriotic War spoke at the celebrations and asked those present to demonstrate a patriotic attitude to the elections, at which the officer in charge of the meeting between the veterans and current servicemen remarked: This is a military unit here, and any statements of a political nature are out of place.

On 22 November 1995, the Leningrad Military District military science society was conducting a scheduled class. Bearing in mind that there was discord within the communist movement, it invited a representative of one of the communist parties to share his assessment of communist pluralism and to tell us about the nature of the differences of opinion. The Officers' Club leadership stopped the meeting with the communist party representative (a Central Committee secretary), citing the military district command's ban on any kind of political events taking place in the Officers' Club. We had to find an "apartment" elsewhere.

So no events of a political nature could be held here on the premises set aside for our permanent use. But what happened the next day? The next day the Officers' Club was filled with many hundreds of cadets, officers, and generals to witness V.S. Chernomyrdin making a "V" shape with his hands representing the roof of our crumbling home and trying to persuade them that "What you cannot achieve, we can." The democratic basis of the election campaign went out of the window and democracy turned into plutocracy. There was on the one hand a ban on a voters' meeting, and on the other an organized rally of the electorate.

As for other methods and means of whipping up support, they were in the hands of Gazprom.

You should have seen the streets of St. Petersburg! Everywhere you went Viktor Stepanovich was looking down at you, making the "V" shape with his hands.

This cost the people a lot of money. However, the mayor's diligence in posting advertisements to please V. Chernomyrdin did not go unnoticed, and as a token of his thanks Viktor Stepanovich put A. Sobchak's wife Lyudmila Borisovna Narusova — a figure who attracts odium in Leningrad — on the list of candidates for the State Duma. True, when the lists of deputies were published L.B. Narusova did not appear in them. But for how long?

After the excess of the street advertisements and the overuse of the mass media to campaign for NDR, you would have expected the government party to be guaranteed the lead. It was nevertheless only in Moscow and St. Petersburg that it found support. In the majority of other regions of Russia the voters remained largely deaf to its appeals. It became absolutely essential to mobilize the reserve — the troops.

The winning over of the Army to vote for "Our Home" was no chance occurrence. Without it the home would have lacked windows and doors. Some 60-70 percent of the troops "placed their crosses" beside "Home," making a total of 1-1.2 million people, that is almost 2 percent of the votes cast for NDR. On top of this, around 1 percent of the Chernomyrdin bloc's votes came from other troops (border, internal, and other categories of troops). In total the soldiers raised the government party's proportion of the vote by perhaps one-third. Without them the "homeowners" would have had to close ranks around their four leaders.

But now let us look in more detail at the very nature of the election results in the Army. According to figures from the press, 82 percent of servicemen in Leningrad Military District voted for NDR while on average around 13 percent voted for it in Leningrad, and 11 percent in Leningrad Oblast. This is a classic example of the Army's separation from the people, which V.I. Lenin opposed some 11 years before the October Revolution; and he never tired of reminding us until the end of his days about the necessity of unity between the Army and the people. At the Sixth Congress of Soviets (1918) he plainly described the Army as a "product of the people's masses."

We defeated fascist Germany in the Great Patriotic War with the assistance of the powerful factor of unity between Army and people.

I have in front of me a letter entitled "Americans' Thoughts About the Soviet People." Its author, Albert Rees Williams, had first-hand knowledge of our country. This is what he says: "During World War II the Soviet Union gave us Americans quite a few surprises. We were surprised by the endless stream of guns, tanks, and airplanes supplied to the front and by the young Soviet

generals' sagacious military tactics and great military skill. But during the war years we were amazed most of all by the people's steadfastness, fighting spirit, and selfless patriotism."

If we wish to preserve all these wonderful qualities, it is essential for us that the soldiers, the civilians operating machine tools or working in the fields, and the scholars and scientists represent a unified whole. Then we will have tanks and guns, sagacious tactics and skill, steadfastness and a great fighting spirit, and selfless patriotism and victory in everyday affairs and on the battlefield.

What our generals did at the defense minister's behest alienates the Army from the people and will certainly have grave consequences for us. This is a warning sign, an omen of our Armed Forces' defeat in a serious military conflict. There is still time to come to our senses. But not much time!

The Duma elections are already history. The presidential election lies ahead, and it obliges us to learn lessons from the Duma elections as the first stage.

The first lesson is that the Army, the internal and border troops, and the other armed formations, cut off from the people as a whole, responded to their generals' promptings and acted during the Duma elections in a manner which did not accord with the mood of the masses. This alienation must be eradicated urgently. The Army itself cannot accomplish this owing to pressure from above. Therefore the Duma will have to draft a law which gives equal rights to different parties and blocs to communicate with soldiers and make their wishes, requests, and appeals known to them, creates conditions so that genuinely democratic elections can be held in military units, institutions, and establishments, and stipulates sanctions for noncompliance with the law.

The second lesson is that the vast majority of servicemen proved unprepared for the elections as they were unfamiliar with... election documents. Hence the urgent task for the bodies involved with educational work among the troops of seeing to it that soldiers are familiar with the law on elections and have their rights and obligations explained to them with regard to the presidential election. You feel embarrassed even to talk about these most simple of truths — they are clearer than clear. However, our experience of the past elections is that those very people whose duty it is to go through the legislation on elections with soldiers have a vague understanding of their task.

Russia: Signature Collecting Scam Exposed

MM2602151796 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA
PRAVDA in Russian 24 Feb 96 pp 1, 2

[Report by Dmitriy Varnavin and Vera Minayeva: "Russian Presidential Candidates for the Price of 1 Kg of Potatoes. Dozens of Illicit Syndicates Collecting Signatures for Future 'Masters of Russia' at Work Throughout Russia. Average Price Is 3,000 Rubles Per Signature!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Why are people running for president? Vyacheslav Ushakov, one of 47 presidential nominees, says that he was summoned to the Kremlin by an "inner voice," which began to speak to Ushakov back in kindergarten and has not stopped since then. The voice is of course a good thing, but money is better. Since each presidential candidate will receive the tidy sum of 14.437 billion rubles [R] from the Central Electoral Commission to cover election expenses. This money could make anyone happy for a long time — the presidency has nothing to do with it. In order to get the billions all you have to do is something extremely trivial — collect 1 million voters' signatures by 16 April and take them to the Central Electoral Commission. A difficult task but no fortresses are impregnable for "politicians."

An announcement recently appeared in the newspapers: "Urgently wanted: People to organize the collection of signature in all Russian regions. Signature collectors paid R3,300 per signature and those organizing the collection R6-20 million per month." Not bad, eh? We telephoned, and Natalya on the other end of the telephone said that we might not have to collect anything. It turns out that all the signatures were "collected during the Duma elections." Now they have to be "copied out" and "processed in such a way" as to ensure that the Central Electoral Commission accepts them. You are paid R200 in advance for the signature, R1,000 for each "processed" signature, and if it is accepted by the Central Electoral Commission without question, you get the entire R3,000. These signatures are to pave the way to the presidency for the irrepressible Andrey Volkov, the billionaire pharmaceutical chemist Vladimir Bryntsalov, and Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev himself. Then Natalya gave us another telephone number where a certain Nikolay should "explain everything."

If you have decided to earn money collecting signatures, it is better not to mention the fact that you are a Muscovite. Since no more than 70,000 signatures need to be collected in each region and there has never been a shortage of "signatories" in Moscow. Therefore, when talking to Nikolay, we introduced ourselves as two needy young people from Vladimir. Nikolay and his

assistants explained over the telephone that the signature "copying" was over and that all that was left for us was the dirty job of going around apartments with lists. We were to collect "two-in-one" signatures for Volkov and Gorbachev at the same time. We would be given R1,500 for each "two-in-one" signature and, in the event of his candidacy being registered, Volkov promised to pay everyone R3,000.

There is every indication that Nikolay sensed something was wrong. At first his telephone was part of the "answerphone conspiracy" and then, when we arrived, the door was opened by an unfriendly blond thug with a pistol at his side. The whole lobby was full of signature lists. Keeping his hand on the holster the thug gave us an appraising glance. Evidently he sensed intuitively that we were not some of his people and told us to "come back Friday."

"During the Duma elections two parties — I will not say which — submitted two absolutely identical lists of signatures. There is every indication that whole syndicates were at work here," Central Electoral Commission Member Yuriy Vedeneyev said. Obviously, that was the kind of "syndicate" we came across. Perhaps even a criminal group because, as we were told by the Central Electoral Commission's Legal Administration, forging signatures may be considered a criminal offense.

Although there were no doubts regarding Gorbachev's "nomination" following our talk with Nikolay, we did nonetheless telephone Aleksandr Manannikov, head of the "Gorbachev" action group. He flatly denied any links with Nikolay and Natalya although he did inadvertently admit that his group had received good money "from some regions."

Telephoning other candidates' action groups showed that only a lazy person would fail to earn extra money collecting signatures. In exchange for our services Mavrodi's group offered us R1,000 each per signature provided that we got together a "strong group" of supporters of Sergey Panteleyevich in Vladimir and brought in 1,000 signatures each per week. The leader of the group would get an extra 10 percent of the overall "profit." Mavrodi's party is confident of success: They have already collected over 0.5 million signatures from 66 regions. We were told at the headquarters of Communist Petr Romanov's action group that "so far not all financial issues have been resolved," but they were very insistent that we called back. Andrey Zavidiya's group — and many others besides — is also using money to collect signatures.

We were not offered money by Rutskoy, Zhirinovskiy, or Anpilov, but we were promised a host of other useful things. As we left Anpilov's headquarters, bedecked

with red banners and pictures of Ilich with a cunning smile, one elderly gentleman gave us Anpilov's signature list, a photograph of the beloved leader, and a telephone number scrawled on a piece of paper: "If anyone is rude and will not give signatures, telephone us, we will come along with the people's militia and we will beat them to a pulp." (Beating is the word used when straightening out the damaged body of a car by means of methodical blows with a hammer). When asked to collect signatures for Zyuganov, Anpilov's men replied: "There will come a time when we will beat him to a pulp too."

Thanks for nothing, they may provide protection, but there is no money....

Russia: Election Seen Adding To Political Polarization

MM2702130296 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian
27 Feb 96 p 1

[Article by Boris Slavin and Valentina Nikiforova under the "Events and Commentaries" rubric: "The Two Extremes of the Election Battles"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The presidential election campaign is gaining momentum. Various political forces have been set in motion, and congresses, conferences, meetings, and political councils are being held again. There is a polarization around the two extremes of the spectrum — left and right.

On Saturday [24 February] the Russian National Union [ROS] gave its view of the presidential election. At their congress the ROS members decided not to field a candidate of their own but to support G. Zyuganov. ROS leader S. Baburin acknowledged that voters do not accept the national idea in its patriarchal form and called for it to be given a modern form.

Similar decisions were made at the Officers' Union congress, whose presidium included S. Terekhov, A. Makashov, A. Lebed, and M. Surkov representing various political trends among officers.

The idea of unity among left-wing forces permeated the speeches by participants in the demonstration and rally marking Soviet Army and Navy Day. Speakers talked about the catastrophic plight of the Army, warned against using it against the people, and demanded the immediate cessation of the war in Chechnya, which is poised to develop into a major Caucasian war. Leaders of left-wing and patriotic movements called for a forum of people's patriotic forces in March in support of a common candidate for the presidency.

At the other end of the political spectrum Radical Democrats and businessmen have joined forces. The dismissed A. Chubays has offered himself as organizer of a new anticommunist crusade. But more cautious politicians do not share his extremism. Even the well-known pathological anticommunist G. Burbulis considers such a tactic disadvantageous for B. Yeltsin today.

Russia's political life is being constantly monitored from abroad. This was reaffirmed by IMF Director M. Camdessus' visit, during which he openly expressed his preference for the incumbent president and advocated a continuation of his policy, which is ruinous for the country and disastrous for the people.

Russia: Premier: Yeltsin's Criticism of Cabinet 'Fair'

LD2602173896 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1657 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 26 (INTERFAX) — Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin believes that President Boris Yeltsin's criticism of the government as regards the solution of social problems in the country is fair, he told INTERFAX Monday.

During his annual address to the Federal Assembly in the Kremlin on Friday, Yeltsin criticized the government for not implementing his instruction on the social protection of the population.

"The criticism is fair and we should not complain," said Chernomyrdin, adding that the government did not do all it could to reduce the effect of the reforms on the social sphere. "Now we need an economy in which production will grow, incomes will improve and unemployment will fall," he said. "This year the solution of social problems will be the most important priority."

"Yeltsin is keeping strict control over the accomplishment of this task," said Chernomyrdin. He added that the solution of social problems will be made within the framework "of the law on the budget."

Russia: Kadannikov: Wage Debt Payment 'Ahead of Schedule'

LD2602151196 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1302 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 26 (INTERFAX) — The repayment of salaries, pensions and stipends from the federal budget debt is being carried out ahead of schedule, First Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Kadannikov told INTERFAX on Monday.

The schedule was fulfilled by 119.4 percent over the past week, he said.

Kadannikov said that he is personally in control of the pace of the debt repayment.

The schedule for the repayment of debts from the federal budget for March is being worked out, said Kadannikov. Its implementation will mean the elimination of the federal budget debt in salaries, pensions and stipends, he said.

"Thus President Yeltsin's relevant instruction will be fulfilled," said Kadannikov.

Russia: Lebed Interviewed on Elections, Chechnya

LD2402001296 Moscow NTV in Russian
1635 GMT 23 Feb 96

[Interview with Aleksandr Lebed, leader of the Congress of Russian Communities bloc, by Yevgeniy Kiselev, in the NTV studio — live; from the "Hero of the Day" program]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Kiselev] Another 'Hero of the Day' broadcast is on the air, I am Yevgeniy Kiselev here in the studio. Good evening. It is 23 February today, the Day of Fatherland's Defenders, but no matter what we call it, it will forever be for us the day of our Army and our Navy.

It is on this day that we have invited General Aleksandr Lebed to our studio. [passage omitted]

Probably as befits any candidate for the post of Russian president, you have already written a book. It is as though writing books has now become an almost obligatory attribute for all politicians with claims to higher reaches of power. It seems to me that your book does differ from all the other similar books, because, to put it crudely, you simply write about your biography therein, refraining from any particular recommendations on how to put Russia on her feet, as it were. It is only towards the very end of the book that you say — and I cannot quote you directly — but the general gist is that a dialogue on how to put Russia on her feet is subject to a separate, serious conversation and when the time comes, you will be ready for this. Does it not seem to you that the time has now come to have a serious chat on this subject?

[Lebed] No, not for the time being, it does not. There is a barrier called a million signatures. You have to first overcome it and then it will happen. This is the way it developed: I wrote the book first and only later did I become a candidate for the presidential post. When I was writing the book, I set myself an altogether different and surely an impossible task.

[Kiselev] What task?

[Lebed] To describe how we, in one of the richest countries, which was victorious in one of the biggest wars ever fought, how we have come to this kind of life.

[Kiselev] That is all, no other task.

[Lebed] That is all and I had no other task.

[Kiselev] Very well then, but why do you want to become president in the first place?

[Lebed] Does it not seem to you that we are stricken with a malaise of polarization? Boris Nikolayevich [Yeltsin], our current president, has declared a war, a crusade against communism, right? If he now gets yet another mandate from the people, inspired by this trust, he will, how shall I put it gently, he will start to implement this idea of a crusade.

As for the left flank, it is not asleep, either. The mood there is more or less the same. They also very much want to topple those who now have power. It would not be so bad if the office folks threw ink-pots at one another, one could somehow live with that, but matters will surely reach the stage of 125-mm political arguments and not just these arguments alone.

Well, I want to preserve peace and calm in the middle. But if we all fail I invite you all to join our partisan detachment, bring your Leica and your notebook; we will have machine-guns.

[Kiselev] [laughing] I hope that matters will not quite reach that stage of partisan detachments and going into the forests.

[Lebed] Both these flanks are tantamount to war. I am against war. Have you ever had to fulfill your internationalist duty?

[Kiselev] Yes, I served in the army in Afghanistan.

[Lebed] Excellent. Then we are blood brothers, as Mowgli put it. So, if you served, you will be aware of three things. In the first place, all wars signify a deadlock to start with and end with a catastrophe. In the second place, all wars, even the 100 year wars, always end with one thing — negotiations and peace. My question has long been this — is it worth it to make mountains of bodies, create widows, orphans, invalids, turn the toil of dozens of preceding generations to dust, so that it may be blown away by the winds, only to sit down at the negotiating table and reach an agreement thereafter?

Perhaps we could eliminate the uncivilized part entirely?

Third, every mother gives birth to a son so that he can live and support her when she grows old. She wants to have grandchildren. Her Vanya or Mohammed — the

name doesn't matter — is the best in the world for her. Someone will probably notice that he is not perfect, but for her he is the best in the world. So let us not cut short a life by a bullet or shrapnel.

[Kiselev] But on some occasions you are in favor of very tough measures. Sometime you say openly: toughness is needed to solve a lot of topical problems. Now you are a Duma deputy and you have put forward a few proposals: to introduce an article on responsibility for wage delays to the Criminal Code, for instance. Am I right?

[Lebed] Yes, you are right.

[Kiselev] Then, to simplify court procedures, right up to the execution by shooting on the spot...

[Lebed, interrupting] That is not true.

[Kiselev] ... drug barons, terrorists, and dangerous armed criminals.

[Lebed] I have not yet put forward such proposals.

[Kiselev] So that is not true?

[Lebed] That is not true. Regarding the responsibility for delaying wages — yes, one has to answer for that.

[Kiselev] Well, do you have any specific ideas and specific proposals for steering the country out of the crisis, a matter that is painful to you, one that you have dwelt on in detail so many times before?

[Lebed] Yes, of course, I have.

[Kiselev] Will you share them with us? If they are not secret.

[Lebed] Well, the time is not ripe. I have not yet cleared the barrier.

[Kiselev] So, one million signatures first, and until you collect them, you will not divulge the secret of your recipes, as it were.

[Lebed] Yes, one million signatures first and only then... [pauses] Well, I have no special secrets, but it could be ridiculous under particular circumstances.

[Kiselev] Under what sort of circumstances?

[Lebed] Well, suppose I tell you all my secrets, tell you everything, and then fail to collect one million signatures. Isn't it ridiculous? It is. From my point of view, at least.

[Kiselev] So you are not sure that you can collect them?

[Lebed] Well, I think I will, if no one interferes.

[Kiselev] You mean if they don't prevent you?

[Lebed] Yes.

[Kiselev] Who may prevent you?

[Lebed] The range is very broad at the moment. We were marching by forty-three columns at the recent Duma elections. So we probably merit a record in the Guinness book.

[Kiselev] In one of your recent interviews you have assessed your chances at the presidential elections as very good. Do you hold the same opinion?

[Lebed] Yes, of course.

[Kiselev] Why?

[Lebed] I told you that a large number of people in this country — quite a large number, I assure you — realize that this malaise of polarization entails a collapse of the Russian state, first of all. There exists this general feeling. Let us wait a little bit — probably a week or ten days — and see what happens, and then come back to this conversation. [passage omitted]

[Kiselev] If Zyuganov or someone else — it does not matter, say Yavlinskiy — comes to you and offers some sort of coalition deal, I do not know, say the vice-presidential post, for many are now talking of having the post of vice-president restored, and if the offer is to run together, in one team, what will you do?

[Lebed] I have put my candidacy forward for the post of the president of the state of Russia and I intend to fight for this post. In this context I do not, as a principle, rule out any coalitions. This sort of thing will depend on the circumstances, a correlation of forces. Earlier I was a soldier and everything was clear to me but now I live in a different world.

[Kiselev] Suppose, the president, the president in power, tells you, and this is the proverbial bird in hand sort of situation: Aleksandr Ivanovich, you are the defense minister from tomorrow.

[Lebed] Aleksandr Ivanovich would have climbed the notorious tank in 1991 if he had wanted to be a minister. Surely you remember the tank?

[Kiselev] Of course, I remember. The one in front of the White House.

[Lebed] I didn't do that. And there have been plenty of opportunities to do something simple along these lines — it would have been very easy, I assure you. Now we are in the year 1996 and I am deeply convinced that Boris Nikolayevich is the historic figure. He will stay in history. But history is a tricky thing: you may go down in history as a good guy or as a bad guy. It is very important to put a beautiful period at the end of a

sentence. You put a period, step aside and look at it: it is there, it is beautiful. True?

[Kiselev] Well, you said once that the army for you is life itself, if I am quoting you correctly. Suppose you have an opportunity to return to the army, all the more so as the president has said twice in public that he is not happy with the army reforms and that a lot needs to be changed drastically. One could assume that you have all the trumps. Because you see, politics is a subtle thing. So are you going to miss the opportunity if it shows itself?

[Lebed] Do you really believe that the post of defense minister is a good opportunity? In a system where there is the commander-in-chief, then the general headquarters subordinated to him, and the two antennae from headquarters: the main staff supervising all the power-wielding structures — all of them, I emphasize, — and the main inspectorate which checks on all the power-wielding structures. And the defense minister is hidden somewhere in this multi-layer structure called the headquarters. And he is a civilian. I am a civilian, you see. I have nothing to do there.

[Kiselev] So you are not happy with the existing system of running the armed forces?

[Lebed] No, I am not happy with the existing system. They are floating about like firemen — a lot of foam but no progress. That is why the reforms are as they are. We have people who think but do nothing, and people who do something without giving thought to it, and the third group of people who neither think nor do anything. Strangely enough, no one wants to combine thinking and doing things. But I, Reserve Lieutenant General Aleksandr Ivanovich Lebed, I know what to do with the armed forces.

[Kiselev] What do you need to do so? Power?

[Lebed] Powers.

[Kiselev] Presidential powers? Nothing less?

[Lebed] Yes, the powers of the commander-in-chief, nothing less. Not to be aggressive, nor to put into practice our imperial aspirations, nor to realize our imperial ambitions. No.

An independent and a sovereign state is underpinned by two gigantic props — a powerful economy and a strong army. I am independent when I am sovereign and if you do not grasp it come and see me and I will explain this to you.

[Kiselev] Very well then, let me ask you about Chechnya. I have chanced upon an interesting analogy here. A presidential campaign is in full swing in America, too.

One of the Republican favorites, Pat Buchanan, who has, incidentally won a very important primary in New Hampshire, has this to say about the painful issue of the United States' relations with Mexico: a wall must simply be built, literally along the whole of the frontier between Mexico and America in order to stop the penetration of the country by illegal immigrants, smugglers, drugs and so on and so forth.

[Lebed] This did happen.

[Kiselev] Well then, you also advocated something similar with regard to Chechnya, to have all the Russians evacuated, to have the troops withdrawn and to build a cordon sanitaire, as it were, and let them prove how economically independent they can be on their own. Is that not the same thing?

[Lebed] No, it is not this idea that is at the root here. The roots are to be found here, on the surface. The first root of the conflict is the well known oil pipeline. The second root is the financial black hole, to begin with for false banking documents and now for these sums being set aside for the restoration of Chechnya. Here [Russian Finance Minister Vladimir] Panskov says not to worry, as it will not be reflected in the budget in any way. A strange statement to make. Third, there is this free criminal zone, something that is totally incomparable — there is the contraband trade in arms, drugs. The third root is that [Dzhokhar] Dudayev is able to exert influence, serious influence, on people belonging to the country's highest political elite and through them indirectly on the president himself.

[Kiselev] So your point of view still is that such a cordon sanitaire is necessary?

[Lebed] It is not that a cordon is necessary, the roots must be severed right here, in Moscow. Why help a republic where builders sent there are killed, why indeed? Nothing, I mean no builders, no building materials, no money should be directed there until there is a complete cessation of combat operations, with the exception of humanitarian assistance, medicines and food, that is all.

[Kiselev] Yeltsin's point of view is known on this issue. He says a bloodbath will ensue once we have withdrawn our troops, Dudayev's supporters will attack their former and current political opponents and there will emerge a more or less the same situation which we can now observe in Afghanistan. Do you not agree with this?

[Lebed] I do not agree with this. It is all very well to fight when you have excess of fuel or ammunition. But if your tank only has enough gas to last an hour, you might as well not hope for a victory in 58 minutes.

Well, a recent operation has shown that they have ammunition aplenty. Where do they get it from, where indeed?

[Kiselev] Do you have an answer here?

[Lebed] I do have an answer, but I would not like to make it public as yet, as I am still not clear about some small points of detail. [passage omitted]

Each person has an inherent sense of ownership, a quality that cannot be eradicated. That is why legitimately acquired private property is a sacred thing, so that people have somewhere to work, create and soar, so that people have something to bequeath to their children, to fight and even die for, if need be, so that people can be citizens and not bums and so that they have something to lose, for that is very important.

[Kiselev] So you are a proponent of a liberal economy? True?

[Lebed] Well, sort of.

[Kiselev] Sort of? So I wasn't accurate enough?

[Lebed] Let us not elaborate. Let's say this is my inaccuracy.

[Kiselev] Right. And finally. You know better than I do that many are trying to link your name as a politician with a possible advent of authoritarianism, or dictatorship, if you prefer. If you become Russia's president, is dictatorship or an authoritarian regime in this or that form possible?

[Lebed] I have embarked on this thorny path exactly because I want to rule out totalitarianism and authoritarianism. But I must express my subjective point of view right now. We have a democracy now, and it is totalitarian in its essence. Don't you think so? Think about it. What sort of democracy do we have when the masses in Tula and many other towns along the railway tracks are complaining that they are forced to give their signatures under threat of wage delays or redundancies or many other punishments, and the Central Electoral Commission says everything is all right? I tell them: give them your signatures, don't be scared. You will be on your own in the voting booth. So don't be scared, give them your signatures. [passage omitted]

[Kiselev] Well, Aleksandr Ivanovich, thank you for coming. Thank you for your answers, albeit short ones. We are looking forward to hearing about your program and your ideas in 10 days or two weeks time. And the main thing: congratulations! Today, 23 February, is your day, after all. [passage omitted]

Russia: Moscow Mayor Luzhkov To Run for Second Term*LD2602142896 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1353 GMT 26 Feb 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 26 (INTERFAX) — Moscow Mayor Yuriy Luzhkov said he intends to run for a second term and hopes for success with the support of Muscovites.

"What we started three or four years ago will be continued. That's why we will propose not only a candidate for the mayorship, but a whole team seeking power in the city to provide the necessary services to its residents," Luzhkov said in an interview with INTERFAX on Monday.

"We have a program and plans for several four-year periods... They are connected with creative work, with the boosting of Moscow's economic potential, with a focus on assistance to pensioners, disabled people and other vulnerable sections of the population who need it," he said.

"Although it is too early to talk about the completion of all the work in such a huge megalopolis as Moscow, we can say that more than half of it will be done by the end of the century," Luzhkov added.

He said that the City Council is likely to announce the date of mayoral elections this Wednesday. "But everybody already knows that the elections for the mayor will take place on June 16, 1996," he said.

Media Issues**Russia: New Deputy Chief To Give State TV Commercial Slant***MM2702124996 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA
PRAVDA in Russian 27 Feb 96 p 2*

[Report by Yelena Ovcharenko: "...Sagalayev Has a Young Deputy"]

[FBIS Translated Text] There has been a sensational appointment in Russian Television: Eduard Sagalayev has announced Miroslav Melnik as his first deputy. He is 30 years old, a journalist by training, and has engaged in business. Miroslav's business interests include tourism and also a prestigious night club in the capital.

Miroslav began his career in journalism at KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA, in the news department. I spoke with Miroslav Melnik right after the collegium session at which he was introduced to the collective.

[Ovcharenko] Miroslav, how do you intend to combine your new work with business?

[Melnik] There can be no question of that. I am returning completely and utterly to journalism, which I essentially never left. I simply wish to try myself in other jobs at different times in my life. In enterprise, for example. This has worked out for me — which is fine.

[Ovcharenko] What does your appointment mean: an attempt to gamble on business? A new orientation for the channel?

[Melnik] No, the All-Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company is a budget-funded organization. But since the channel's ratings are falling, we will be trying to improve them, using commercial as well as other means.

[Ovcharenko] What kind of questions will you be tackling?

[Melnik] Financial and personnel questions and management of affairs.

Military & Nuclear Issues**Russia: Duma Official Urges Yeltsin To Form Defense Council***LD2602155096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English
1355 GMT 26 Feb 96*

[By Ivan Novikov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, February 26 (ITAR-TASS) — The military reform in Russia presupposes the establishment of a Defence Council at the Russian president, Lev Rokhlin, chairman of the State Duma (Russian parliament lower house) Defence Committee, said in an interview with ITAR-TASS here on Monday.

This Council should include the country's top leadership as well as military leaders. "The head of state has no body now which would deal directly with questions of defence as well as the military reform and which would have broad powers," he added.

"There is the Security Council, but it is beset with a multitude of problems, and it lacks a professional element which could concentrate attention solely on the military reform, which, as Boris Yeltsin admitted in the message to the Federal Assembly (Eds: Russian parliament) advances slowly."

In the legislators' opinion, the country needs legislative measures which could raise the combat potential of the army and navy, help in reorganising armed forces and tackle social problems of servicemen.

The Defence Committee works on a bill which has already passed the second reading, but which, according

to Rokhlin, needs serious improvement. It is planned that this document should include a provision on an interdepartmental inspection service subordinated to the president.

It will submit information to the country's top leadership on the real situation in power-welding structures, including the army, which, as Rokhlin noted, "is often distorted or embellished".

Russia: Pacific Fleet Commander Appointed Navy Chief of Staff

LD2702131996 *Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1200 GMT 27 Feb 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] By edict of the Russian president of 23 February, Admiral Igor Khmelnov, commander of the Pacific Fleet, is appointed chief of the main staff of the Russian Navy. It was reported to INTERFAX today at the fleet's press service that Vice Admiral Vladimir [Kurayedov] is appointed commander of the Pacific Fleet by the same decree. [Kurayedov] was formerly chief of staff of the Baltic Fleet.

Russia: Yeltsin Edict Regulates Export of Nuclear Materials

LD2302132696 *Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1311 GMT 23 Feb 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, February 23 (ITAR-TASS) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin has signed a decree on control over exports from the Russian Federation of dual purpose materials and equipment and corresponding technology which can be used for nuclear purposes and are therefore subject to special control.

The press service of the Head of State said the decree brings nation controls in line with Russia's international commitments in the field of nuclear non-proliferation.

The decree endorses a list of dual purpose materials and equipment and corresponding technologies that can be used for nuclear purposes.

Russia: Moscow Police Report Illegal Nuclear Waste Storage

LD2602155796 *Moscow INTERFAX in English 1302 GMT 26 Feb 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Feb 26 (INTERFAX) — The Moscow police in conjunction with the State Nuclear Supervision Committee have established the violation of rules for the storage of radioactive waste with a total weight of 24 tonnes, a spokesman for the Moscow Interior Department told INTERFAX on Monday.

The waste is being stored at the warehouse of the research center for the radioactive security of space objects of the Ministry for the Medical Industry, the spokesman said. The owner of these wastes is requested that the wastes be buried before May 1, 1996, on the territory of the Mayak production association in the Chelyabinsk region of Russia.

Federal Assembly

Russia: Roundup of Duma's Legislative Activity

MM2602155396 *Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 24 Feb 96 p 13*

[Unattributed report: "Legislative Portfolio"]

[FBIS Translated Text]

State Ordered Not To Lose Out

The decree "On the Progress of the Privatization of the 'Norilskiy Nikel' Russian Joint-Stock Company and the Socioeconomic Problems Caused Thereby," drawn up by the Duma Committee for Industry, Construction, Transportation, and Power Generation, has been adopted at a State Duma plenary session as a point of departure.

The final adoption of the document has been postponed until next Wednesday [28 February], after it has been finalized to take account of the proposals from deputies, taking particular account of the alternative draft decree submitted by "Yabloko" faction members Sergey Ivanenko and Mikhail Yuryev.

The draft decree adopted as a point of departure instructs the government to "resume an active role in administering the block of shares in the 'Norilskiy Nikel' Russian Joint-Stock Company held by the state." The document recognizes as purposeful the "prohibition of the alienation in full or in part of the block of shares held by the state, as well as its proportional consolidation during any possible further issues."

Moreover, taking account of the "Norilskiy Nikel" Russian Joint-Stock Company's role in safeguarding the Russian Federation's national security, it is proposed that "representatives of foreign states and firms should not be permitted to manage it" and that a special parliamentary commission be set up to monitor the progress of the Russian joint-stock company's privatization.

Hungry Police Will Not Save Us

The State Duma considers the government's work as regards the funding of law enforcement organs to have been unsatisfactory. This is stated in a house decree "On the Crisis in Funding Spending on Law Enforcement Activity and Safeguarding the State's Security" adopted

on the initiative of Viktor Ilyukhin, chairman of the Committee for Security.

The Duma has appealed to the Russian Federation president to institute proceedings against those officials guilty of providing unsatisfactory funding for law enforcement organs. The Russian Federation Comptroller's Office has been instructed to verify the "existence of instances of budget funds allocated for the funding of law enforcement organs in 1995-1996 being diverted to provide loans to commercial banks."

The Duma decree also states that, as of 12 January, the amount owed by the government to law enforcement organs for salaries stood at 1.774.1 billion rubles (R), and at R961.1 billion for January-February this year. Taking account of actual forthcoming expenditure, an extra R1,338.3 billion will be required by the year's end.

Budget Under Parliamentary Control

The State Duma has overridden the Russian Federation president's veto on the law "On the Russian Federation Budget Classification." The document, for which 364 deputies voted, was adopted in its previous version. Three parliamentarians voted against.

Tatyana Nesterenko, a member of the Committee for the Budget, Taxes, Banks, and Finances, who submitted the document, stressed that the adoption of this law "ensures real control over the execution of the 1996 budget" by the Comptroller's Office and the Russian parliament.

In particular, the document defines for what purposes and in what amounts budget funds will be allocated, and sketches out the list of those who will implement the budget appropriations (with the help of distributions ministry by ministry). According to T. Nesterenko, this law "will be the first swallow which allows Federation component budgets to implement their rights."

Excise Duties Arranged in Order of Size

The Russian Federation State Duma has adopted a law "On Excise Duty." The version of the document previously rejected by the Federation Council was adopted after being finalized by the conciliation commission.

The law lays down the list of goods subject to excise duty. We are talking, in particular, about ethyl alcohol derived from all forms of raw material, alcoholic drinks, beer, tobacco, jewelry, and certain types of minerals.

As was announced when the law was submitted, it reduces the duty on beer by 15 percent and the duty on wine by 20 percent. The law makes beer produced in the Far North exempt from duty.

Under the law, duty rates for goods produced on Russian Federation territory and liable to duty are the same throughout Russia.

Loose Capital Back to Russia!

Around \$200 billion in Russian capital is currently located abroad. This was stated at a State Duma press conference by Viktor Ilyukhin, chairman of the Duma Security Committee.

According to him, a draft law envisaging an amnesty for persons who have taken capital abroad but who provide information on it within 100-150 days and are able to retrieve it, is in the pipeline. "If this is impossible," V. Ilyukhin noted, "capital should 'work for Russia' even when abroad." An article envisaging terms of imprisonment for those who refuse to do this will be included in the Criminal Code, V. Ilyukhin noted.

Russia: Duma Sets Up New Bodies To Solve Chechnya Problems

MM2702123896 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 27 Feb 96 p 6

[State Duma appeal dated Moscow, 16 February 1996: "To the Leaders of the Russian Federation State Authorities, Russian Federation Components' State Authorities, and Public Associations and to All Those Involved in the Armed Conflict in the Chechen Republic" — from the 'Documents' section]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Russian Federation Federal Assembly State Duma expresses its exceptional concern over the problem of securing the release of the Russian citizens, both civilians and servicemen, being forcibly held by illegal armed formations and of finding those who have gone missing during armed clashes on the territories of the Chechen Republic and the Republic of Dagestan.

Proceeding from the desire to resolve this problem in a humanitarian manner, on 9 February 1996 the State Duma adopted the decree "On the Announcement of an Amnesty for Persons Involved in Unlawful Actions Associated With the Armed Conflict on the Territory of the Republic of Dagestan in January 1996."

The State Duma urges all those involved in the armed conflict to take effective measures to examine and resolve this problem, guided by the norms of international humanitarian law applying to armed conflicts of a non-international nature. The State Duma believes that only such an approach will help to arrange a dialogue and to ensure the maximum level of trust among those involved in the armed conflict, without which its political settlement is impossible.

In order to resolve these tasks the State Duma has exercised its authority to set up a Russian Federation Federal Assembly State Duma commission to assist in securing the release of forcibly held servicemen and civilians and in finding those who have gone missing during the armed conflict in the Chechen Republic and in adjacent regions (hereafter the Commission). It includes 18 State Duma deputies.

At the same time, understanding the whole complexity of this painful problem, we believe that it can be resolved only by pooling the efforts of all the interested parties. The State Duma urges the leaders of the Russian Federation state authorities, the Russian Federation components' state authorities, public associations, and illegal armed formations and other persons involved in the armed conflict in the Chechen Republic to cooperate with the Commission in resolving this problem and asks them to appoint their own plenipotentiary representatives to implement such cooperation. For its part the State Duma is prepared to hold consultations with representatives of the heads and leaders central to the resolution of the problem, in Moscow, at any time suitable for the sides, and guarantees the personal safety of the said representatives.

The State Duma deems it of fundamental importance to pool the efforts of legislative and executive bodies and of the public, for which purpose a single organ is to be created on the basis of the commissions that already exist that must be capable of coordinating activity aimed at resolving questions associated with the process of freeing forcibly held servicemen and civilians and finding those who have gone missing during the armed conflict in the Chechen Republic and adjacent regions.

The State Duma counts on reciprocal understanding from the leaders of the Russian Federation state authorities, the Russian Federation components' state authorities, public associations, and illegal armed formations and other persons involved in the armed conflict in the Chechen Republic in discharging this exceptionally important and socially significant humanitarian mission.

Moscow, 16 February 1996.

Russia: Duma Commission on Privatization Profiled
MK2702101096 Moscow KURANTY in Russian
23 Feb 96 p 4

[Report by Aleksandr Sadchikov: "Everything That Does Not Belong to Us Has Been Stolen. Such Is the Standard Applied by the Communists to Privatization Results"]

[FBIS Translated Text] As the presidential election marathon is picking up speed, Russian authorities are

becoming increasingly more willing to revise their previous unpopular decisions. In the near future, the passions will run especially high over privatization and its results. Scarcely had professional economists and ordinary Russian people had time to form an opinion about the dismissal of Anatoliy Chubays from the post of first deputy premier, when the State Duma set up a commission to analyze the results of privatization in 1992-1996 and the responsibility of officials for its negative results.

Naturally, it was the Duma Communists who have come up with an idea "to analyze the results" of privatization. It is known that the electoral platform of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation [CPRF] — pathetically called "For Our Soviet Motherland!" — contains an unequivocal promise "to stop the plundering of public property and the infringement of basic rights of the working people." Of course, the Zyuganovites interpret "plundering" in their own way: Everything that does not belong to them has been stolen. There is nothing new in the attempts of the Communists to attack privatization. In the previous, fifth, Duma, they repeatedly tried to pass draft laws whose essence boiled down to an urgent need to nationalize everything that had been privatized. An example is the law "On Urgent Measures To Extricate the Country From Economic Crisis," drafted by Igor Bratishchev, an economist and a Communist. The draft law passed through two parliamentary hearings, but, notwithstanding even the State Duma's opposition to the executive branch, the deputies rejected it. Incidentally, many economists said then that this was due a low, nonprofessional quality of the draft law itself, rather than the methods proposed by the Communists.

Whereas, however, in the former Duma the Communists experienced some difficulty with imposing their vision of economic problems, it is much easier for them to do so in the present, sixth, one. The proposal of Sergey Reshulskiy, member of the CPRF faction, to analyze privatization results, was met with enthusiasm. Pavel Bunich, chairman of the Committee for Ownership, Privatization, and Economic Activity, was instructed to set up a corresponding commission, and shortly thereafter he informed his colleagues about its membership. It includes representatives of all factions and deputies groups, as well as five related committees — 14 persons in total.

Looking at the names of Duma commission members on the list, we can easily notice two fundamental things. First of all, it shows the predominance of the Communists, both official ones — i.e., CPRF faction members — and those who are sharing their views. Unlike all former Duma commissions (for instance, the famous Govorukhin commission on the investigation of the rea-

sons for and circumstances of the Chechen events), the commission on the analysis of privatization results was formed by applying the proportional representation criterion, rather than the principle of equal representation of all factions and deputies groups. Communist Oleg Shinkarev said: "Since we, the Communists, account for one-third of the Duma, we should have the corresponding number of deputies in any commission to be formed today, tomorrow, or later."

This logic seems strange. In the former Duma, the "Russia's Choice" faction numbered 72 deputies; the Communists, 47; whereas, for instance, the Party of Russian Unity and Accord, only 14. The principle of equal representation of all factions, however, for some reason, was being strictly observed. Now — incidentally, with the encouragement of Speaker Gennadiy Seleznev, who is not going to be a nonparty man — in addition to Mullanur Ganeyev, a CPRF faction member, who has been elected commission chairman, two more Zyuganovites, Vera Savchuk and Leonid Kanayev, have been included in this commission. Mikhail Koshkin, agrarian; Yevgeniy Ishchenko, member of the LDPR (Liberal Democratic Party of Russia) faction; and Vladimir Sergeyenkov, member of the "People's Power" group, can well be ranked as "ideologically close" to the Communists. In the opinion of some observers, other members of the commission will not stand up for the official stance on privatization either. This, in particular, can be said about Vladimir Laritskiy, who represents "Russian Regions," and Ivan Grachev, delegated by the "Yabloko" faction. Commission members representing five related economic committees also inspire little optimism or hope for an unbiased approach to the property redistribution issue. Suffice it to say that the LDPR's Gennadiy Lisichkin (the Committee for Economic Policy) and the CPRF's Petr Romanov (the Committee for Industry, Construction, Transportation, and Power Generation) have been delegated there.

Probably the only proponent of the governmental stance on privatization could be Pavel Veselkin, representing "[Russia Is] Our Home", who had been a deputy general director of the "GAZ" (Gorkiy Automobile Factory) Joint-Stock Company before he was elected deputy. His opinion, however, will hardly be of any interest to either his colleagues in the commission or the Duma majority.

Another remarkable feature of this commission is the absence of prominent Russian economists. The problem is not a lack of professionals in the sixth Duma. The reason of this fact is that competent economists simply do not want to play political games of the Communists, whereas the CPRF faction itself unfortunately cannot boast any recognized authorities in the field of economics. According to Pavel Bunich, members of the

commission are fully aware of this drawback and even proposed that he should be the head of his creation, but he managed to escape such a lot. Bunich believes that it is much better to have his hands untied and give an open and unbiased assessment of the results of the commission's activity.

In the opinion of many Duma economists, it is too early to speak about any results since the commission has not even begun to work yet. A member of this Duma body has told your KURANTY correspondent that the commission is still working on its statute. According to available information, this document should specify the main directions of activity and set time limits when final conclusions are to be presented. Specifically, it is known that commission members are insisting actively on having access to materials of the Accounting Chamber, the State Property Committee, the Tax Police, the Tax Inspectorate, and the General Prosecutor's Office.

Incidentally, virtually no one in the lower house harbors any doubts now about what the conclusions of this Duma's creation will be. Moreover, because of the second part of its name — "On the Responsibility of Officials for Its (Privatization's) Negative Results" — in the parliamentary corridors the commission is often called "Chubays's death." The commission will hardly confine itself to attacks on "the Chubays-style privatization" only. Naturally, the blame for all mortal sins and, most importantly, "the plundering of public property" will be put on "the present ruling regime of Yeltsin." There simply can be no other conclusion by definition or, more precisely, because of party affiliation of the members of this Duma body. Likewise, there can be no doubt about the time when these conclusions will be made public: Commission members themselves are saying that they will produce their final report in two or three months, that is, virtually on the eve of the presidential election.

In a couple of months, however, there could be a situation when actions of the executive branch forestall the most radical decisions of the parliamentary commission. According to the same Bunich, "it is precisely the executive branch that is renouncing privatization today and is making a major emphasis on nationalization." The chairman of the Duma Commission for Ownership, Privatization, and Economic Activity is sure that in the near future there will be personnel changes among the principal officials who have dealt with privatization, and the heads of all Chubays's associates will roll. Therefore, at present the executive branch is even more dangerous for privatization than the Duma, whose decisions will be of an exclusively recommendatory nature. The statement of Interior Minister Anatoliy Kulikov regarding the need to

nationalize some commercial banks provides sufficient proof of this trend.

It can well happen that in two months, when the Duma commission finishes its work, its conclusions will prove belated. Bunich thinks that in this event the committee headed by him will remain the only body capable of adjusting this antiprivatization policy of the executive branch in some way. It is probably obvious to everyone that the process of privatization in this country has not been very successful, but is it worthwhile to sacrifice it solely for the benefit of electoral populism?

Regional Affairs

Russia: Dagestani MP Fears Widening of Chechen Conflict

LD2602182296 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1657 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, February 26 (INTERFAX) — Dagestani Parliamentary Chairman Mukhu Aliyev has condemned actions by Russian federal troops in the Ingush villages of Arshty and Galashki.

He described them as "poorly-thought-over and rather dangerous."

Dagestan and Ingushetia are both Russian internal republics.

"Any careless moves by federal troops on territories neighboring Chechnya [a breakaway internal Russian republic] may trigger an enlargement of the Chechen conflict," Aliyev told Interfax Monday.

Russian military men's actions in the North Caucasus without consultations with or the consent of the local authorities "threaten all of us with another Pervomayskoye," he said, referring to the village in Dagestan where Chechen hostage-takers went after a raid on the Dagestani town of Kizlyar and where federal troops carried out a combat operation to suppress them and rescue hostages.

Aliyev said he regretted that the Russian leadership did not have a realistic concept for ending the war in Chechnya, "without which stabilization in the entire region is impossible."

According to military sources, units of the Russian 58th army moving to Chechnya via Ingushetia fought with Chechen separatists on February 22.

According to the Ingush authorities, federal troops were the first to open fire on the outskirts of the Arshty village on February 22, resulting in casualties among civilians.

Russia: Yegorov Seen Canvassing for Yeltsin in Voronezh

MM2702113596 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI
in Russian 27 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Aleksey Pavlov: "Nikolay Yegorov Visits Center of Chernozem Region"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Voronezh — The regional branches of the Reform-New Policy, Russia Is Our Home, and Union of North Don Cossacks public movements in Voronezh Oblast backed Boris Yeltsin's candidacy for the Russian Federation presidency 16 February. The city has set up a Boris Yeltsin public support committee, which has been joined by new public associations and parties. It comprises over a dozen parties and public movements. Among them Democratic Russia, an enterprise association, the Orthodox Patriot association, and others.

Voronezh Oblast's influential political forces may quite well have regrouped in favor of Boris Yeltsin under the influence of Russian Federation Presidential Chief of Staff Nikolay Yegorov, who has been visiting the area at this time. Outwardly the schedule for his visit was a traditional one, involving meetings with representatives of the local administration, labor collectives, public movements, businessmen, and journalists. One of these meetings took place at the Zarya Science-and-Production Association, for instance, where leaders of the city's major plants were gathered.

If you consider that virtually one-third of the oblast's industrial complex is made up of electronics enterprises and the Zarya Association is the largest of them, [it is not surprising that] the discussion proved particularly sharp and vexed. The main paradox in the situation here is that right now, despite having high technologies and skilled cadres, given the tough competition these enterprises are unable to gain access to the world market independently, without active state support.

Voronezh's Elektronika Joint-Stock Company, for instance, having assimilated the production of integrated circuits with standard dimensions of 0.8 microns for computer equipment, has failed to compile a portfolio of orders for its output. Collectives are still very dependent on ministry officials, who, as one director aptly put it, "direct everything without being accountable for anything."

This is not the first time that the president's chief of staff has heard complaints from local leaders regarding the tyranny of the capital's officials. Moscow is responding keenly to this. President Boris Yeltsin must be expected to take renewed steps to seek an acceptable formula for relations between the center and the regions.

Economic Issues

Russia: Chernomyrdin Discusses Economic Achievements, Problems

LD2602182396 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1657 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, February 26 (INTERFAX)- Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin told Interfax Monday that the Russian government had attained last year's main economic targets, but added that the general results of the government's work were not good enough.

"The main economic problems were not completely resolved," he said.

He noted at the same time that the government had "observed all parameters envisaged in the programs."

Speaking about last year's achievements, he said that the budget deficit had decreased to 4 percent of the gross domestic product and the rate of inflation fell from 18 percent in January to 3.5 percent in December. The rate of industrial decline also slowed down and stood at just 3 percent last year, he said.

"As chairman of the government I cannot be satisfied with the government's work if the population's living standards are falling," said Chernomyrdin.

He pointed out that the government's priority target this year was the solution of social problems.

Among other problems facing the government he named "low wages and pensions, wage arrears, tax evasion and inefficiency of the laws."

He said that a new tax code must be urgently adopted.

Speaking about the IMF's enlarged \$10.2 billion credit, Chernomyrdin said that the credit had been extended because Russia had observed all of the economic indices agreed upon with the IMF last year.

He said the IMF would continue to oversee Russia's economic performance.

Chernomyrdin said, commenting on the financing of the work to rehabilitate Chechnya, that a total of 16 trillion rubles was to be put into this work in 1996.

He noted, however, that "out of this sum, only a small share will go to economic rehabilitation as such." Most of the money will be spent on paying pensions and salaries to servicemen, workers at law-enforcement bodies and the personnel of Chechnya's state-run enterprises, said Chernomyrdin.

Russia: Chernomyrdin Interviewed on IMF Talks

LD2302010196 Moscow Russian Television Network
in Russian 2040 GMT 22 Feb 96

[Interview with Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin by Yelena OZRINA, in Moscow on 22 February — recorded; from the "Vertikal" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] [OZRINA] Today, 22 February, Prime Minister Viktor Stepanovich Chernomyrdin had a meeting with Michel Camdessus, the managing director of the IMF, at the government building, the White House. [turns to Chernomyrdin] Viktor Stepanovich, regarding the results of the talks with Michel Camdessus, can you please tell us how complicated the talks were and what was agreed?

[Chernomyrdin] As is always the case, there are no easy talks, naturally. Especially when it is such a difficult and complicated matter, and when the program discussed was not just for one, but for three years. Naturally, this required thorough preparation on our part, and the IMF also did a lot of work here. And the managing director himself, Mr. Camdessus, came over to close the deal. This is why the conversations were specific and rather difficult, because what was discussed is the government's action program — namely, how Russia will be developing in the next three years. And the main question was of course the specific program for 1996.

I am very pleased with these talks. Practically, all the main aspects have been agreed. We signed a joint statement for the IMF, together with the Central Bank, in the presence of the president, in his office. This statement sets out the main points. The president signed his own letter in which he confirms the stipulated course and handed it over to Camdessus. I have been speaking so far about procedural matters, but I think that the main result, on the whole, is satisfactory.

[OZRINA] There were demands connected with the lowering of, in general, oil and gas dues. What figures did you have to agree on, and what were they?

[Chernomyrdin] Yes indeed, that was a fundamental and main issue. Yes, we did agree, but there will still be a continuation. We were due to have cancelled the export dues last year, but we were unable to do so, since we lacked a mechanism to compensate for everything that would immediately follow on as a result of the cancellation of the export dues. Therefore, this will now, in principle, begin from 1 July. Some will be cancelled from 1 April, but as a whole it will be from the 1 July. The mechanism itself has now provided for the procedure and the rate of their reduction.

[OZRINA] What then are the reductions? What did you specifically agree, if can give the figures?

[Chernomyrdin] Well, the initial idea is that on 1 April it will be around 10 percent. We ourselves are working this out. We may decide on 14 percent. It will be either 14 or 10 percent. We are currently looking into this, but in principle they will be cancelled from 1 July.

[Ozrina] How then is Russia to make up for the monetary loss from this lowering of dues on such an important export product as oil?

[Chernomyrdin] A fairly complicated mechanism is at present being worked out by the Finance Ministry and the Economics Ministry. They will do this in conjunction with the Ministry of Fuel and Energy. It really is not a simple issue why we were unable to act as decisively — we did everything but this — in 1995. Well, we still have time to accomplish some work, and we shall do so. But the most important thing is what we have achieved. First, the credit will be allocated. I think...

[Ozrina, interrupting] Could you specify the amount of the credit, or has that not yet been agreed?

[Chernomyrdin] We have agreed a credit of 10.11-10.2 billion [dollars].

[Ozrina] Impressive figures. Initially the figure of 9 billion was mentioned and it has been increased by an entire billion. Why was this?

[Chernomyrdin] There were many reasons. First, I must tell you, well, first, this is favorable to us, this is not a simple credit, not an ordinary credit. This is a way out, well, for us this is very important way now to maintain our economy. But, most importantly, this shows confidence in us — this is the only way I can regard this. It is confidence in the policy we are pursuing — it is not simple; it is complicated. But of course our problems here are so overwhelming that this is not very evident. Not everyone can evaluate it, but in principle everything we are doing shows we are laying a good foundation; we have essentially laid a foundation for the future development of our Russian economy. This this credit in general — above all offers the possibility, what we are saying today about this credit, this confirms once more that our policy, our economic policy, is receiving recognition in the West. This means that the possibility will appear for our firms to emerge onto the Western market and that the international financial bodies support and agree that we are entering into normal civilized relations. This means that the foreign investor can today come to market, work now without being worried. For, we are...

[Ozrina, interrupting] Credit-worthy?

[Chernomyrdin] Credit-worthy, that is to say, a country which arouses confidence. And why is it that we are suffering? Some things in our country are not going well. There are some things which are not going well in our country. By this I mean that there are not enough laws, and more work needs to be done regarding normative affairs: mechanisms, taxes, and the taxation system. Now together with everything, what we are we doing, what we intend to do is to put this into a program, and it is in this way that these programs and agreements signed with the IMF have come into being. [Filing to be resumed after 0600 GMT on 23 February]

[Ozrina] Has there been any discussion of the situation that could arise in Russia after 16 June? What I mean is, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation has now stepped up its activities, and therefore do investors not fear possible instability in the country?

[Chernomyrdin] Of course they do. It cannot be otherwise.

We are scaring ourselves here, trying to wind ourselves up and raise fears — while for others the worse it is, the better. This is what they — I mean the opposition, those who want to rock the boat — need to succeed in the elections. There is obviously nothing good in this.

Most importantly, our own investors are scared. Not everyone among them.... [pauses] We are talking first and foremost about our own investors. It is the domestic capital that we have to use to good effect. Instead, we are scaring each other. So who in these circumstances can be expected to carry on as if nothing is happening, to invest and work normally? This is just impossible.

To say nothing about foreign investors. Who.... [pauses] Therefore I would like to reiterate that we have as guarantees our government programs endorsed and supervised by the president. He has himself reiterated it again and again, and tomorrow he will mention this in his annual address. He will also define the main parameters for 1996.

We can see quite clearly what figures we can expect in 1997 and 1998. The International Monetary Fund estimates there will be a six percent overall growth in the economy in 1997-98. This may or may not be true — one can argue with this, but it is in all the indicators. This is possible if we carry on working calmly and purposefully on the programs we are implementing with such difficulties. Although we are nonetheless implementing them, we are not dashing this way and that. It is difficult, but still we are moving forward.

Of course, we have many problems, notably social ones, of course. This is the most important task the government now faces. This task has been set and is now

being monitored on a day-to-day basis by the president. You can now see for yourself that the sparks are flying, that heads have started to roll, and this is going to continue unless we learn to work.

For some reason everyone has started to believe that anything goes now — that you can stop paying taxes, you can evade taxes, you can stop paying wages, you can stockpile your funds in ruble and hard currency accounts, and still not pay wages. But it is not going to be like this. Mind you, it should not be like this. No one will get anything else from anywhere.

Incidentally, the credits are not going to save us. We must do everything ourselves, by our own hands. But if taxes are not paid, all of us are the first to suffer. How can we pay wages? Where can public sector workers and servicemen get their wages? Some hide [money], some make barter deals. We must put an end to that. We must put an end to that, and even more heads will roll, if people — managers first of all — do not pay heed to that.

However, the government too has a lot to do here. The legislature has a lot to do as well. Laws have to be adopted more speedily....

[Ozrina, interrupting] Which laws do you have in mind? The tax code? What other laws are we missing?

[Chernomyrdin] Yes, we need the tax code. We have to sort things out with the land code too, not to put too fine a point on it, and also with the second part of the civil code. By the way, now that we have the civil code, many issues just do not arise any more, and that without any decrees or resolutions. They no longer arise because we have the civil code — so all you have to do is go and read it and comply with it. If you do not comply, you will have to answer for it. This is what we need.

So once again: I am not oversimplifying thing, but neither am I overcomplicating them. I am in favor of everyone doing his work. We have to learn to abide by the law. We have to be responsible, first and foremost to our state and people. This primarily concerns the producers, those who produce things. After all, we are not so poor nowadays. So people do have a point when they say that a lot is somehow drifting and flowing away, or being stored somewhere, but not actually being used. What we need is to use these resources.

[Ozrina] One last point then. Did the events now unfolding in Chechnya affect the talks in any way? Do foreign investors not fear that all the money to be given in loans to the Russian Federation could be used in Chechnya too?

[Chernomyrdin] You know, of late we have been conducting numerous negotiations, holding many meetings with investors, businessmen, and heads of major companies. Large credits are now coming in, some with and some without state and government help — because there already is confidence in some major Russian firms. So, you know, such questions are no longer being asked.

It is our pain, do you not understand? It is our.... [pauses] calamity. It will in any case have to.... [pauses] It is Russia. I do not see it as Russia versus Chechnya. Nothing like it. It is all inside Russia. It is all ours, and it is up to us to resolve these problems, and no-one else will solve them for us either. So to restore order in general, to resolve this complicated and hard Chechen problem, to do all this, to restore everything — all this is for us to do. I shall say again: All this is our home. No-one else will solve this for us; no-one can and we shall not allow anyone else to solve this. No-one is going to anyway.

[Ozrina] Unfortunately.

[Chernomyrdin] Unfortunately. Well, you can say unfortunately or not, but no one needs do it. We are not asking anyone. This is not how it should be. It is our problem, a hard and complicated one, but ours. So we and you, we shall be solving it.

Another thing I should say: Of course, it is not a pleasant task, it is hard, but I cannot say that many, or anyone for that matter, are linking these things, saying — we are not coming to you because of this thing you have. If anyone does make this link, we do not need them. There are many who are willing, so we have those to work with.

Look, we are now entering foreign markets ourselves. We are working. No one can tell Russia that it is [pauses] Today we are the main creditor for the CIS countries, for some of them in particular. Not some kind of international financial organizations, but we ourselves, Russia. We are no longer....

[Ozrina, interrupting] Which countries?

[Chernomyrdin] I am referring to the countries close to us.

[Ozrina] Is it Belarus? Is it Kazakhstan?

[Chernomyrdin] Oh, there are a lot. We are working with all of them.

However, the conditions we are offering are not the same as those the international financial organizations are offering us, or them for that matter. We have a very different approach. So here no-one can say we are in any way.... [pauses] Oh no. We have moved forward a

long way. We are no longer the same as we were in 1993, to say nothing of earlier periods.

[Ozzina] Thank you.

It is hard, I repeat, but we can steer out of this situation — only if we work in an unflustered, purposeful, calm, and convincing fashion — which is exactly what we are doing and what we will be doing.

[Chernomyrdin] Thank you.

International Affairs**Ukraine: Foreign Trade Ministry on Increased Investments From Abroad***LD2302181996 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1352 GMT 23 Feb 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, February 23 (Interfax-Ukraine) — The total volume of foreign investments in Ukraine's economy grew by 37.53 per cent in 1995 to have reached \$750.1 million by January 1, 1996.

As "IF-U" was told at the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade, the greatest flow of foreign investments last year came from the USA — \$171.4 million, with the annual volume of foreign investments being \$281.5 million.

Among the largest investors are also: Germany (\$129.6 million), Great Britain (\$46.3 million), Cyprus (\$38.6 million), Russia (\$37.8 million) and Switzerland (\$35.2 million).

The bulk of non-residents' investments is made in the following branches of economy: home and foreign trade (\$201.3 million), food industry (\$108.4 million), machine-building and metal-working (\$96.3 million), ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy (\$96.3 million), chemical industry (\$29 million), and production of construction materials (\$28 million).

On their part, Ukrainian companies have invested \$29.5 million in other countries' economy by January 1, 1996. Switzerland places first in Ukraine's investments (27.3% of the total volume). It is followed by Hungary (25%), Russia (13%) and Cyprus (8%).

Ukraine: Kuchma, Yeltsin Discuss Relations on Phone*LD2602200896 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service
in Russian 1947 GMT 26 Feb 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev, 26 Feb — Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, who is now on a planned short-term vacation, today had a telephone conversation with Russian President Boris Yeltsin. Kuchma's press service reported that the presidents discussed a wide range of issues relating to Ukrainian-Russian relations.

Leonid Kuchma informed Boris Yeltsin on the results of his working trip to the United States, and on meetings and talks with the U.S. leadership and international financial organizations.

During the conversation, details of Boris Yeltsin's forthcoming visit to Ukraine were discussed, and the range of issues that will be the subject of the talks in Kiev were specified.

Ukraine: Russian Duma Chairman Discusses Removing Problems*LD2602193696 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian
1830 GMT 26 Feb 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — At a meeting with the leaders of Ukrainian Supreme Council groups and factions, Russian State Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev said he is certain that the signing of a wide-ranging political treaty and an agreement on the Black Sea Fleet "will remove most of the painful problems in relations between Ukraine and Russia." He called on Ukraine to become a fully-fledged member of the CIS, emphasizing that "the Ukrainian and Russian legislative bases will still have to be coordinated."

Nikolay Ryzhkov, leader of the People's Power group, said he did not understand why Ukraine had not resolved the issue of integration into the CIS. Russian communist leader, Gennadiy Zyuganov, expressed a similar opinion, stressing that economic cooperation would ensure both states' sovereignty.

Ukraine: Russia's Seleznev Questions Status of Kuchma's Health*LD2602231396 Moscow INTERFAX in English
2213 GMT 26 Feb 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, Feb 26 (Interfax) — Russian State Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev had a talk with Ukrainian Supreme Soviet Chairman Aleksandr Moroz without any advisers present in Kiev Monday. The two men discussed the outlook for the signing of a Russian-Ukrainian treaty and an agreement on the Black Sea fleet.

Following the end of a 90-minute meeting, Seleznev told Interfax that, according to Moroz, both documents are at an advanced stage.

Moroz, he said, does not see why Russian President Boris Yeltsin should postpone his visit to Ukraine, scheduled for April, during which the two heads of state are to sign the treaty and agreement.

According to Seleznev, Moroz believes that all outstanding issues in the draft agreement could be resolved before the April summit.

Seleznev also said that he had asked Moroz why the scheduled meeting between the State Duma delegation and Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma did not take place. Seleznev was told that Kuchma was ill, "but I am not sure that this is true," he said. "In point of fact, Moroz avoided answering the question by saying that the Ukrainian president has been reproaching Moroz for attacking him," Seleznev said.

Ukraine: Russia's Zyuganov on Importance of Ties
LD2602194696 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian
1830 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — Relations with Ukraine will always remain extremely important and strategic for Russian communists, Russian communist leader, Gennadiy Zyuganov, said at a news conference on 26 February. He is convinced that cooperation between the two states will only deepen their sovereignty. "Without such cooperation neither Ukraine nor Russia will be able to get out of the economic crisis," Gennadiy Zyuganov noted. He believes the disruption of economic links between former USSR republics to be "an anomaly, which actually deprives them of economic independence." Gennadiy Zyuganov is convinced that "Ukraine had more sovereignty in the time of the USSR than it has now."

A UNIAN news agency correspondent reports that the communist leader said he is in favor of Ukraine's entry to the customs union and other CIS structures, because "there is good reason for it." According to him, trade turnover between Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan has increased by several times thanks to entry to the customs union.

At the same time Gennadiy Zyuganov is convinced that the issue of setting up a new union is only "the business of the people's of the present CIS states."

He said that 25 million Russians resided outside Russia and stressed that he will stand up for their rights in the Russian parliament and international structures. At the same time the communist leader said that Russians' rights in Ukraine "are being assured a great deal better than in other countries."

Ukraine: TV Report on Zyuganov Delegation Visit
LD2602224796 Moscow NTV in Russian
2100 GMT 26 Feb 96

[Quotation marks denote recorded passages — from the "Today at Midnight" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Announcer Aleksandr Shashkov] Gennadiy Zyuganov, to all appearances, feels very confident. He is now part of a parliamentary delegation which has gone to Kiev. But the local nationalists there, unlike the Ukrainian colleagues of our parliamentarians, were not very happy about that visit.

[Correspondent Andrey Shevchenko] Most likely the members of the delegation of the State Duma of Russia who arrived on a two-day visit to Kiev today did not feel any great sense of hospitality. They were met at the airport by activists of the Congress of Ukrainian

Nationalists protesting against the war in Chechnya and against the arrival in Kiev of communist leader Gennadiy Zyuganov. The delegation's meeting with President Kuchma and with the foreign minister of Ukraine will not take place.

Representatives of the national democratic faction gave their Russian colleagues a hard time by bombarding them with questions about the division of the Black Sea Fleet, the territorial claims of the previous Duma, and the national rights of Ukrainians in Russia.

They stated, in the end, that they did not want to have anything to do with the Russian communists at all.

However, there were no disagreements at the delegation's meeting with the chairman of the Supreme Council and the head of the Socialist Party of Ukraine, Oleksandr Moroz.

[Gennadiy Seleznev, chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, captioned] "We told Oleksandr Oleksandrovich today that we were impatiently awaiting him in Moscow. We are awaiting your group of deputies for links with Russia. We are setting up our own group of deputies for links with Ukraine today, and around the beginning of April they could already operate at the level of working contacts."

[Shevchenko] Ukrainian right-wing deputies stated that they were not informed in good time about the arrival of the State Duma delegation and accused the socialist Moroz, who personally invited the Russians to Kiev, of using parliamentary channels for his party aims.

It seems that the leaders of both the Russian and the Ukrainian left-wing forces really do have a great interest in this visit. Petro Symonenko, head of the Ukrainian communists, is reckoning on strengthening ties with his Russian colleagues and on strengthening his internal position on the crest of the Russian wave.

For the chairman of the Ukrainian parliament, and likely Ukrainian presidential candidate, it offers the opportunity to demonstrate his diplomatic qualities and loyalty to the principles declared, which are very much in keeping with the ideology of the present leadership of the State Duma.

And for Gennadiy Zyuganov this trip is the possible continuation of his pre-election campaign at home. It is not surprising that Kiev took a particularly close look at the Russian presidential candidate.

[Zyuganov] "It is not possible to get out of the crisis of the system without full restoration of ties between Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, while not encroaching upon political sovereignty. We have reached

agreement with Belarus and Kazakhstan on a whole series of positions. I am confident that we will reach agreement with Ukraine, too. I am absolutely confident of this."

[Shevchenko] However, it was not possible to convince everyone of this. Tomorrow the Duma delegation has planned meetings with Prime Minister Yevheniy Marchuk and a visit to the Antonov aviation works. It is possible that the parliamentary members will have a better reception there.

Andrey Shevchenko from Kiev, Nova Mova television company, specially for Today at Midnight. [video shows delegation arriving at airport, Nikolay Ryzhkov in front of Gennadiy Zyuganov coming down plane steps, protestors with placards in Russian, Ukrainian and English saying "Zyuganov - Go Home!", placard showing swastikas, people waving fists, Seleznev meeting officials, Zyuganov at news conference]

Ukraine: Nationalists Protest Russian Delegation's Arrival in Kiev

LD2602183196 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1657 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, Feb 26 (Interfax - Ukraine) — About 50 active members of the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists picketed Kiev's Borispol airport Monday where a delegation of Russia's State Duma, led by Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev, arrived. The demonstrators carried posters reading: "Seleznev, Go Home!", "Stop Aggression in Chechnya!", and "No to the Communist Plague!".

Representatives of the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists told journalists that they were protesting against the war in Chechnya and the spreading of Communist ideas.

They also announced that they would organize more actions of protest during the Duma delegation's stay in Kiev.

Russia's parliamentary delegation, including leader of Russia's Communist Party Gennadiy Zyuganov, will stay in Kiev for two days.

Ukraine: Udovenko Signs Cooperation Agreement in Indonesia

LD2602153996 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1337 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jakarta (Indonesia), February 26 (Interfax - Ukraine) — Ukraine and Indonesia have signed in Jakarta today an agreement on cooperation in the fields of economy and technology.

As an Interfax - Ukraine correspondent reported, the agreement has been signed by Ukrainian Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko and his Indonesian counterpart Ali Alatas. The Ukrainian Minister is currently on an official visit in Indonesia.

H. Udovenko noted that the agreement signed had laid groundwork for the formation a the contractual basis for relations between the two countries. Until recently the relations between Ukraine and Indonesia were based on the protocol on the establishment of diplomatic relations.

The Indonesian Foreign Minister expressed hope that the agreement "will become the basis for the future agreements on cooperation in the fields of economy and trade".

In the course of a press conference after the signing ceremony, the Ministers disclosed that other agreements were currently being outlined, in particular, in agreement on drawing and protecting investments, irevention of double taxation, cooperation in the field of air transport.

As Head of the Information Department of the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry Yuriy Sergeyev said, in the course of the two-hours negotiations. A. Alatas evaluates prospects for cooperation between Ukraine and Indonesia in the fields of economy and trade as being "vast".

H. Udovenko paid a visit to the Parliament of Indonesia and met with its Speaker and the members of the first Parliamentary Committee, who are in charge of issues pertaining to international policy and defence.

On Tuesday H. Udovenko will be received by President Suharto of Indonesia and will visit the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and some Ministries.

Ukraine: Ministry Official on Mideast Policy

WS2702090396 Kiev INTELNEWS in English
0032 GMT 27 Feb 96

[Interview with Ukraine Foreign Ministry Middle East Department chief Yevhen Mykytenko, by Halia Pavliva, INTELNEWS staff writer, place and date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [INTELNEWS] How do strong Ukrainian-Israeli relations impact relations with Arab countries?

[Mykytenko] The strategy of Ukrainian foreign policy is aimed at gradual involvement of Ukraine in the world's political, economic, humanitarian and other processes.

Deepening our relations with Israel, we can say, has no negative effect on our relations with Arab countries. On the contrary, we try to follow the principle of equi-proximity and not equi-remoteness. We follow the foreign political principle of equi-proximity both with Israel and the Arab countries.

At the same time, we do not hide from Israel that we have had very good relations with absolutely all the Islamic countries. On the other hand, it is no secret for these countries that Ukraine also maintains balanced relations with Israel, in the first place owing to considerations of a pragmatic character. We consider Israel a state of strategic weight in the Middle East region. Simultaneously, we also feel a great interest of Israel in Ukraine.

In the political sphere, this interest is in Ukraine as a newly formed state of Europe that has a considerable weight on both the post-Soviet and East European areas. In economic terms, Israel is interested in the Ukrainian domestic market. (It) exports medicines and foodstuffs as well as expanding investment policy, transfer of know-how and cooperation in the aerospace sphere.

Concurrently, one should not forget the important humanitarian. More than 200,000 former Ukrainian citizens are living in Israel.

I would like to note one more very important point. The regular rounds of Israeli-Syrian negotiations have been being carried out quite successfully. The gradual settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict forms a very favorable climate for establishment of, first of all, regional cooperation. Warming-up in The Middle East will play into the hands of not only participants in the conflict but also all countries able of making their contributions into both the establishment of political partnership and strengthening of trade- economic ties.

[INTELNEWS] Briefly, what image of the Ukrainian state has formed among the Middle East countries over the four years of its existence?

[Mykytenko] Both in Israel and among the Arab countries, Ukraine has the image of a stable, balanced and open partner. A partner which acts proceeding, first of all, from its own national interests, and, in the second place, fulfilling all the UN Security Council resolutions concerning the Middle East crisis settlement.

[INTELNEWS] First Deputy Foreign Minister Kostiantyn Hryshchenko said that "oil is a big policy. Oil can be easily bought if there is money. We have none of it." What is the Ukraine's oil policy in the region?

[Mykytenko] It is well understood in both Washington and Tel-Aviv that Ukraine is dependent upon energy-

generating materials and supplies. Ukraine receives 80 percent of those from Russia. It is understood in the all Western capitals that Ukrainian sovereignty is only possible if the country its energy demands. Therefore, we are looking for ways to diversify the supplies of oil and natural gas to Ukraine.

To process Libyan light oil and oil from the Gulf countries, our refineries should be modernized. This appears to be a realistic prospect.

Implementation of a joint project with Turkey to construct an oil pipeline going through territory of the two countries would considerably help us. This would allow to supply oil from Iraq. But, unfortunately, this is possible only in the future. The situation around Iraq is still very tense.

[INTELNEWS] If the UN and Iraq reach an accord on possible sale of Iraqi oil in order to purchase food and medicines for its population, will Ukraine realize its attempts to buy this oil?

[Mykytenko] It is clear that the negotiations of Iraq with UN will be long. The main target of the possible Iraqi oil sale is payment of war indemnities to Kuwait. It is envisioned that \$4 billion worth of oil will be sold. The Western countries which took greatest part in the conflict settlement will be the main buyers. Ukraine will aspire to buying a certain portion of this oil. There is no final answer, but the issue is on the stage of working up.

Later, if Iraq preserves its integrity, if the UN sanctions are lifted, if Iraq settles its problem of the Kurds living in the oil-rich northern regions of the country, Ukraine will buy oil from Iraq. In this case, the Ukrainian-Turkish project has very good prospects. As an Arabic proverb goes, 'those who will live will see and hear.'

[INTELNEWS] Does Ukraine maintain relations with extremist political organizations in Iraq and Iran? How does this affect relations with Israel?

[Mykytenko] I would like to stress that Ukraine does not maintain any relations with the extremist political organizations of not only Iraq and Iran, but Ireland and Sudan also. We always keep ourselves at a distance from those countries that have a negative international standing. We have neither the right nor the wish to maintain relations with extremist organizations. We carry out no talks with those Palestinian organizations which do not recognize the existence of Israel. We openly state that we do not support their policy. Another case is the Palestine Liberation Organization or the so-called Palestinian national self-government bodies. We maintain relations with popularly elected Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat.

[INTELNEWS] What do these relations consist of?

[Mykytenko] This is political negotiations, summits. During the UN General Assembly 50th session, President Leonid Kuchma had a meeting with Yasir Arafat.

I would like to emphasize that the more moderate Arab countries also maintain no relations with the extremist organizations of the Arab world.

[INTELNEWS] How would you characterize relations being formed between Ukraine and Iran?

[Mykytenko] The relations between Ukraine and Iran are quite natural. I have already spoke about our dependence on energy-generating materials. We find understanding in the West. Iran is one of the Ukraine's partners in this sector. We are not interfered with in (our) cooperation with Iran.

I wish to stress that we do not supply arms to Iran. Ukraine has repeatedly stated so. We observe all the agreements on non-proliferation of missile technologies, offensive arms and nuclear technologies.

National Affairs

Ukraine: Article Outlines Constitutional Scenarios
WS2602153896 Kiev KIYEVSKIYE VEDOMOSTI
in Russian 21 Feb 96 p 3

[Article by Artur Bilous and Maksym Korzhysky from the Association of Young Ukrainian Political Scientists and Politicians: "To Where Will the Constitutional Swing Move?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A working group of the Constitutional Commission has concluded the process of preparing a new version of the basic law draft. Let us try to analyze possible scenarios for putting the "constitutional swing" in motion.

Let us address the fundamental constitutional issues.

1. Will the future parliament be monocameral or bicameral? When those opposing bicamerality say that it may be a step toward the federalization of Ukraine, they do not speak the truth. Bicameral parliaments have existed for a long time in such states as France, Italy, and Great Britain. In actual fact, both the leftists and Rukh, as well as the "Reforms" faction, and Oleksandr Moroz personally, are afraid of an excessive strengthening of presidential powers through an upper chamber representing a regional elite. It is quite likely that the idea of bicamerality will be "knocked over."

2. Will the president be only the head of state or, in addition, the head of the executive power? The draft constitution provides for the president being head of state only. It remains unclear who is to head

the executive power, since the prime minister was granted only coordinating functions, and his status was determined in an offhand way and unclearly. Of course, it would be most advantageous for the Presidential Administration if the president remained the head of state only, simultaneously maintaining all levers for appointing officials in the executive branch. However, all the participants in the constitutional process will obviously demand that the status of the president and the prime minister be determined.

3. Will the Prosecutor's Office be included in the system of executive or judicial power, or will it become a separate structure? Will the functions of control and supervision be maintained by the Prosecutor's Office, or will they be reassigned to the judicial branch? The acuteness of this question has decreased of late since various political forces are trying, by organizing a noisy "anticorruption" campaign, to use the Prosecutor's Office to their advantage. Most likely, the general prosecutor will be appointed by parliament at the president's recommendation.

4. Will the oblast and local soviets be bodies of territorial representation of the heads of local soviets of lower level alone [as published], or will they be elected in direct elections? Both the presidential team and the rightists are for the abolishment of oblast and rayon representative bodies in their current form. At the same time, it is not clear what stance will be taken by oblast and rayon administration heads who are dependent, on the one hand, on the president, but do not want to "expose" their deputies, the majority of whom are formed by local economic and management elite fairly closely connected with appropriate administration heads.

The further development of events may follow several scenarios. Chances for the adoption of a constitution by the Supreme Council are minimal — not one of the options will be able to secure one-third of the votes.

The situation may develop according to a different scenario. The deputies who are in favor of an amicable resolution of the constitutional problem are fully able to affix their remarks to the draft constitution and submit this document to a referendum by a simple majority of votes. The draft constitution proposed by the Communist Party of Ukraine will fail to gather 3 million signatures necessary to submit it to a referendum.

If differences of opinion among the parliamentary groups of rightist orientation are too large, the president may propose the prepared draft constitution to a referendum unilaterally. The stakes will rise sharply, inasmuch as the referendum's results may either push the president into resignation or cause early elections to

the Supreme Council. Subsequently, the following scenarios are possible:

a) The legislators will try to propose their own draft constitution. However, given the current configuration of forces in the Supreme Council, it will be a difficult task. In addition, there are grounds to assert that the parliamentary draft constitution, when submitted to a referendum, may fail to secure the majority of votes both in its parliamentary and presidential versions. In such a case, the president will be in a more advantageous position, since, despite the general decline of trust in the authorities, the popularity of the head of state is greater than that of parliament, and this means that the president will collect more votes. By the same token, he will obtain a footing to accuse the Supreme Council of blocking the constitutional process, and seeking a dissolution of parliament;

b) If the president declares a referendum bypassing the Supreme Council, the following scenario is more likely: Several parliamentary groups will address the president with the proposal to cancel the declared referendum, work out an acceptable — both for the president and the majority of deputies — version of disputable provisions of the draft constitution, and once again propose the draft constitution to a referendum, but this time through the Supreme Council.

This majority will be formed primarily of right-centrist groups and factions, in particular, portions of the following deputy factions: "Agrarians for Reforms," "Statehood," the Interregional Deputies Group, "Independents," "Reforms," the Rukh faction, as well as "Unity" and "Center." These groups may be expanded by a faction (in the event it is created) of a new centrist party scheduled to hold its constituent congress on 23-24 February 1996.

The above-mentioned groups will be joined by pragmatically oriented deputies of a leftist orientation who are now supporting O. Moroz. This refers to portions of the deputy groups "Socialists" (I. Chyzh, N. Kyyashko, I. Vinsky) and "Agrarians" (V. Suslov, S. Dovhan). These deputies will primarily be interested in maintaining their parliamentary seats, posts in the Supreme Council Presidium, and influence over the [administrative] apparatus, as well as in anchoring the image of the leftist movement approaching the center.

Most likely, the president and the deputies will nonetheless find a common language. It seems that the process of adopting a new "great" constitution will be similar in many respects to the process of adopting its "small" forerunner — the Constitutional Agreement: The president will maintain the bulk of his present powers; parliament will remain monocameral, while the deputies

will not part with their parliamentary seats, which are as comforting as their party membership. This will keep everybody happy.

Ukraine: Kuchma Aide Views Government-Parliament Ties

AU2602171896 Kiev HOLOS UKRAYINY
in Ukrainian 17 Feb 96 pp 10, 11

[Interview with Dmytro Volodymyrovych Tabachnyk, head of the Ukrainian Presidential Administration, by HOLOS UKRAYINY Editor in Chief Serhiy Pravdenko; place and date not given: "We Citizens Would Like To Know About Interaction Between the Branches of Power"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Pravdenko] Dmytro Volodymyrovych, if you do not mind, let us talk about rumors. Or rather, I will speak about rumors and you — about the true situation. Well, they say that... It is said that the Supreme Council and the president are in a state of confrontation. On the one hand, in almost every state, there exists such confrontation either between the president and parliament or between government and parliament. Generally speaking, it seems to be an ordinary situation when there is a search for solutions. However, for our country and for the transitional period, is this not too much of a luxury? Moreover, in many cases, talk of confrontation is linked to your name. For example, the head of the Presidential Administration is often referred to as the accumulator of controversies and contradictions. Why do you think this happens?

[Tabachnyk] Perhaps in every country, there exists confrontation and a certain conflict between the legislative and executive powers. It is an objective state in a democratic society. The division of powers exists precisely to enable each of them to hold back the accumulation of blunders by the other branch so that decisions could ultimately be optimal. The more democratic a country, the softer the confrontation, because legal mechanisms provide for resolving problems.

With regard to us, I believe that we must avoid confrontation, both in words and deeds. The process of coordinating decisions should not be looked upon as confrontation, but only as a struggle of opinions with resulting implementation of a coordinated position.

It is true that the executive power tries to assume more powers during the transitional period to be able to resolve urgent issues more efficiently and accurately. The legislative power always stands up for the interests of those parties or social groups that are represented in the parliament and also seeks to increase its influence on society. [passage omitted]

[Pravdenko] Sometimes debates flare up on the legitimacy of the president and the parliament. I believe, for example, that people's ideas and views are better taken into account during elections to the Supreme Council because we elect one out of two candidates in the second round. Many people actually vote against one deputy by voting for the other. The choice is limited. Deputies are elected in small constituencies. On the whole, by definition, the parliament expresses the people's strivings better than the president does. I am not, God forbid, questioning the president's legitimacy. I believe, however, that the parliament deserves more respect from the president and the Presidential Administration. The president and his advisers must do some convincing and explaining, and not engage in conflicts or exert pressure. The president must lead the people and the state toward overcoming the crisis, and he should do this through the parliament. [passage omitted]

[Tabachnyk] [passage omitted] It seems to me that our mechanism of interaction does work, although it still may not be sufficiently well developed. Every voting on major issues in the parliament ensures this interaction.

With regard to the elections of president and Supreme Council, people give preference to the two most brilliant ones out of many. These two get to the second round, and then there is a single winner.

As a rule, when there is a wide scatter of opinions, when millions of people take part in the elections, there is always a shift to the right, just like with the presidential elections. Leonid Makarovych Kravchuk's centrist position ensured his victory in 1991. Three years later, Leonid Danylovych Kuchma expressed centrist positions the best and won. [passage omitted]

[Pravdenko] The Czechs, for example, managed to implement privatization in a very proper manner, and truly capable people became owners. Those whose plans for business and not connections or blackmail took over....

[Tabachnyk] Our main miscalculation was that we lost too much time at the beginning. We missed the time when the shadow capital was not yet so strong.

[Pravdenko] In other words, we allowed the semi-criminal world to gain strength and find its bearings.

[Tabachnyk] Yes, and it started gulping down piece after piece, and most tasty ones at that.

[Pravdenko] I agree. Things were delayed and we were too late. What next?

[Tabachnyk] We need to proceed precisely from the accelerated rates of development that started yielding fruits in 1995 and the most democratic privatization

mechanisms. We must also use, as much as possible, sales of property through auctioning. The buyer's solvency may be verified by the bank or audit. If somebody has no money, he should not resort to tricks.

I think that precisely here it is very important to return to the theme of interaction between legislative and executive powers. Why? I understand that many deputies do not come out against privatization as such, but are concerned about the way it is conducted and into whose hands that property gets. In short, they are worried precisely by the lack of social responsibility on the part of many participants in the process. The deputies must be given appropriate information. It is simply not reasonable to let this situation prevail. What to do next? We need joint actions by the legislative and executive powers and joint search for uncommon solutions aimed at achieving expected results.

[Pravdenko] However, how can one speak about unity of actions between the two branches of power when, even in the Presidential Administration and in the Government, there are economists who profess dissimilar views? It would suffice to compare the proposals by Pynzenyk, Shpek, or Sabluk, not to mention others, to realize this. Perhaps, we have too many economists holding high posts in the government and not many among advisers?

[Tabachnyk] I would rather maintain the opposite: We have too few economists, including at the Supreme Council. That is why there are many decisions that do not always work.

Perhaps there has never been and will not be a common point of view either in the Parliament or in the Cabinet of Ministers. However, after a decision is adopted, stringent executive discipline must come into force. It is true that on privatization issues, different economists propose different ideas. Notwithstanding this, over the last two years, a single structure of bodies implementing privatization has been created and experience has been accumulated that only needs to be further improved. One should not close his eyes to the fact that the socially oriented way of privatization is not always efficient.

What I mean to say is that an enterprise privatized by a collective does not always function efficiently. This is hard to realize for those people who have worked at a particular plant for many years, and yet is it in their interest to watch how their enterprise is falling apart.

[Pravdenko] Perhaps we should not so much talk of social justice, which is understood as everything for everybody and on an equal basis, but of social effectiveness of privatization — ensuring that competitive products are manufactured and jobs are maintained so that there

are steady receipts flowing into the budget and into the pension fund. This does not rule out encouragement of those engineers and workers who might want to procure shares of their enterprise and thus take part in handling and distributing the profit.

[Tabachnyk] [Passage omitted]... Our president's policy is oriented toward an efficient economy.

[Pravdenko] [Passage omitted]... Does it not seem to you that we are under the threat of turning into a kind of Latin American state? The contrast between wealth and poverty is growing and social responsibility of the "new Ukrainians" is close to zero, and the country's external debt is building up. The country does not even have a monetary unit of its own. The introduction of the hryvnya keeps being postponed. Those who can afford it rely upon U.S. dollars and are putting aside as many of them as possible. Several billion "greenbacks" have already accumulated "under the population's mattresses." So whose economy are we strengthening this way?

[Tabachnyk] I will try to answer your question from the end. Last year, we did manage to ensure a certain stability of the Ukrainian karbovanets and overcome inflation. The karbovanets could be put aside for making purchases the family needed. It was possible to save some money from the November and December salaries and buy something for one's wife or child. In 1994, there was no such possibility — inflation ate up all the savings quite fast. Therefore, even though we are not yet emerging from the crisis, we are most definitely approaching the state of stabilization.

Now about the threat of turning into a society of incredible social contrasts (I do not want to refer to this as a Latin American experience). I tend to remain an optimist and am convinced that this does not threaten Ukraine. The dynamics of impoverishment in 1995 slowed down sharply. Over one year, the real wages and their growth by 30 percent overtook the growth of retail prices in the country. Besides, the high level of education in the country is saving us from such a threat. Ukraine has an educated face, which is determined by teachers, medical specialists, and engineers. Plus the hard work that characterizes our citizens, as well as their ingenuity and self-respect. Let us put it this way: We are not that type of nation to turn into miserable service personnel. The population's demands for the government and for all branches of power are growing, and the government must take the needs of the people into account.

Yes, there are problems. For example, we feel the shortage of personnel at the state level — for economic and juridical work and for drafting taxation and legislative

acts. However, over the four years of independence, the personnel problem has become less acute. The president and the parliament are starting to work on creating legislation capable of boosting production and entrepreneurship.

As regards the deadline for introducing the hryvnya, let competent specialists at the Cabinet of Ministers and the National Bank have their say. There are many complex problems here: from ensuring the balance of imports and exports to ultimately putting an end to inflation and so on. [passage omitted]

[Pravdenko] It is wonderful the way you stand up for the president's prestige and underscore his role. This is understandable, or otherwise how could you head the Presidential Administration?

My assessment of the president's activity is much more humble, because I would like to see him more dynamic and consistent. Once the war against the mafia has been declared, let the public know of its results, even if they are tentative; once the course toward reforms is announced, please do it without affecting the population's standard of living, and so on. It is clear that this is my personal opinion. No more than that. Well, now, at the end of our conversation, I would like to return to the beginning. To the circumstance that Dmytro Tabachnyk's name is, after all, associated with the confrontation of powers and that impulses issue from you.... Perhaps it is your role to take upon yourself criticism and be a lightning conductor so that the president can work more quietly.

[Tabachnyk] I did not think about it. However, if the president finds it at least a little better with such a lightning conductor, I would not object to having such a role.

However, I have never deliberately provoked confrontation or conflicts. Reasons for differences between the executive and legislative powers have always existed in any country, Dmytro Tabachnyk or no Dmytro Tabachnyk. Perhaps I have not yet worked sufficiently with people's deputies and have not yet smoothed over our sharp edges with them. As the editor of a parliamentary newspaper, you may perhaps be subjective. However, it will be history and not ourselves that will assess the dynamism of policy and the activity and consistency of Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma. [passage omitted].

Ukraine: Kuchma Approves Demydenko as Crimean Prime Minister

LD2602192396 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian
1830 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Simferopol, 26 Feb — The Ukrainian president has approved the appointment of Arkadiy Demydenko as Crimean prime minister, Valeriy Pustovoytenko, minister to the Cabinet of Ministers, has told the Crimean Supreme Council Presidium. Demydenko, who is currently Crimea's deputy prime minister, was chosen by Kuchma from five nominees.

At a meeting with Crimean Government ministers, Pustovoytenko said the decision is a result of continuous consultation with local government representatives, business managers, political party leaders, and parliament deputies in Crimea. Demydenko passed an interview at the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers and the president's office. The Crimean parliament presidium included the approval of the Crimean prime minister into the parliament's agenda for 28-29 February.

Speaking to correspondents, Pustovoytenko expressed hope that, after the appointment of a new prime minister, every effort would be made to "remove the difficulties standing between Ukraine and Crimean autonomy." Commenting on Demydenko's appointment, he said he is a candidate suitable to all political forces. He added that the Crimean Government's main task is to work together with the Ukrainian leadership to improve living standards on the peninsula.

Deputy Prime Minister Demydenko told correspondents that if the Crimean Parliament approves his appointment, he will submit his program of economic reforms within one or two months, based on greater economic independence for Crimea. He named Crimea's oil and energy complex and the transport infrastructure as the most promising areas for investment, which would bring a quick return and take Crimea out of the crisis.

Ukraine: Mounting Opposition Against Communists Cited

WS2702101296 Kiev UKRINFORM in English
0810 GMT 27 Feb 96

[From the "Current Events" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Presidential press service circulated a press release in Monday, February

26, which states the society's mounting opposition to attempts by the Communist Party of Ukraine and other pro-communist and socialist orientation parties and groupings to fan societal tensions and passions and thus destabilize the nation.

According to the press release, protests against these reckless acts have been increasingly coming not only from other political parties, movements and public associations but also from labor collectives and individual citizens all over Ukraine, who voice their unqualified support for President Kuchma's political course of radical economic and social reforms and demand that the Communist Party be banned for its anti-Ukrainian and Pro-imperial activity and rhetoric.

The Communist-sponsored sign-in for an all-Ukrainian referendum questioning Ukraine's very independence and sovereignty and aimed at pressing for the USSR's restoration has evoked massive protests, too, the press release says.

The Ukrainian Army Officer Association, the Congress of Ukrainian Intellectuals in Feodosia (Crimea), stockholders of the Drogobych oil refinery are listed by the press release among the host of other organisations demanding to put an end to such politically provocative and reckless acts by the pro-communists.

Many messages to President Kuchma urge the speedy adoption of the new Constitution of Ukraine and a ban on the Communist Party as an anti-state organisation which should be tried by the International Tribunal for its hideous crimes under the totalitarian regime it generated and topped for long decades.

Belarus

Belarus: Lukashenka on Relations With Russia, Yeltsin

LD2602223196

[FBIS Report] Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian at 1735 GMT on 26 February broadcasts a 16-minute report over video on Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka's upcoming visit to Russia, due to start on 27 February. The program contains a recorded interview with Lukashenka by an unidentified correspondent, during which Lukashenka views relations between the two countries and the two presidents.

The announcer says that there are 1.5 million Russians in Belarus, and during the past four years only 8,000 people have changed their citizenship, and 700 have left for Russia. Igor Saprykin, Russian Federation ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Belarus, says that he has never yet had to deal with any complaints of ethnic discrimination from Russians and that there is no Russian problem in the republic.

Lukashenka begins his interview by comparing himself to Russian President Boris Yeltsin:

"To some extent we are similar in nature. Yeltsin's best trait is that he is surely incapable of betrayal, ever. My biggest virtue is that I have never ever betrayed anyone and that I am incapable of betrayal. With such characteristic features, we hit it off with each other as human beings, if one is to talk of how we perceive each other in purely human dimensions. Let me stress again, that as far as the Russian president is concerned, human relations have a significant bearing on our relations as presidents and leaders of states. In connection with the fact that he regards this as very important — and so do I, for I have already learned this from him — we have come to have very good relations as presidents, too.

"Now many people refrain from speaking well about Yeltsin. Many people now refrain from talking about Yeltsin due to certain reasons. Here, too, I wish to be an honest and sincere person. Not a single president has done as much for Belarus as Yeltsin has recently. Yeltsin saved Belarus in 1994, but this is a separate matter."

The correspondent asks: "You have fuels in mind?"

Lukashenka replies: "Not just fuels. Things would have been very difficult for us, but here his human intuition, his human qualities, I would say, saved Belarus at that time. It is not just a matter of fuels. We were in a very difficult situation, but as I have said, it is a separate and very involved matter."

Asked about his fame as champion of integration, Lukashenka denies he is going to Moscow with a draft confederation treaty. "My package does not now include any confederative treaty, but let me tell you sincerely that I intend to discuss with the Russian president the issue of our further integration and the destinies of our peoples. However, let me say again that I am categorically opposed to any models which are imposed from above, no matter whether they concern a confederation, a federation, or anything else. I want to resolve economic and human problems, and if we get a confederation or a federation or any other type of alliance which may be even more monolithic than the Soviet Union as a result of these problems having been resolved, then, for God's sake, life itself should lead us to this.

"So, the way forward is not to be imposed from above, underpinned by formal, hackneyed declarations. The way forward is from the bottom up, through the resolution of the human problems that we all share. This is my concept, and Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin did lend it his support. We talked of this in Sochi. Let me stress again that my package of documents does not now contain any treaties."

Asked about the benefits of the economic and customs union with Russia, Lukashenka says: "You know, from the purely economic and financial viewpoint, we lose as much as we gain. However, it is of utmost benefit for the prospects of our economy, as viewed from the present time. We have our eastern market, the same market on which we used to be present and from which we could simply have been ousted. We have unhampered movement of people, goods, capital, and so forth, what is so bad about that? Let us conquer the eastern market, with its 200 million people — this is a benefit to our economy, why should we give this up? So, in this respect we gain a lot and we can gain more still in the future.

"As for our current gains, well, we did introduce individual import duties in reply to Russian duties, and here we did have some losses, is that not the case? However, we currently get certain goods from Russia duty free — gas, oil, and so on — and so we gain a lot in this respect. I am talking about the current state of affairs. Some people say wait until tomorrow, for this is a temporary measure, but currently this state of affairs is of benefit to Belarus. Our treaty defines with precision the future steps to be taken. If one side or the other should come to feel that this arrangement is of no benefit, we will then have negotiations about it, at that time. We will immediately sit back down at the negotiating table, and we have provided for the appropriate mechanisms in order to revise our relations.

Currently we do not lose anything and there are colossal prospects."

"Alyaksandr Rygoravich, you just said that Belarus is not losing anything. It is said that the upkeep of the Russian military bases on the territory of Belarus costs our republic very dearly indeed. How was this taken account of in the documents and treaties? Are you going to talk about it at all with Boris Yeltsin in Moscow?"

Lukashenka responds: "There is no need to talk about it as yet. I stress again that this was indeed taken account of. We presented the Russian side with our bills for this sum and are getting fuels cheaper. That is to say, we are not losing anything."

"That is to say, everything is being compensated?"

"Naturally. I will even tell you that it is being fully compensated."

Asked about Belarus's position on NATO's plans to expand, Lukashenka, who is head of the Republican Security Council and commander in chief of the Republican Armed Forces, says that his position on this issue has never altered.

Lukashenka says: "You remember my position. It has never changed for the past 18 months. I said right at the start that Belarus and its leadership [FBIS Report] president find NATO's hasty eastward drive unacceptable. No one needs this. My position has never changed. Currently our positions — that of Russia and Belarus — coincide completely. I think that deep down inside it has always been Russia's position and it is simply that they never used to speak about it so frankly and openly before, I mean the leadership of the Russian Federation. As for my statement that NATO's infrastructure is coming closer toward Belarusian borders, that is indeed the case."

The correspondent asks: "Alyaksandr Rygoravich, does all this mean that the Russian nuclear arms temporarily deployed on the territory of Belarus will not be withdrawn, and that the withdrawal of warheads will be suspended?"

Lukashenka responds: "You know, we have been keeping to schedule where the withdrawal of warheads to the Russian Federation is concerned. We have very little left by way of these warheads. There is no point in us keeping these nuclear warheads in Belarus. We do not control them. You know that they are controlled from Moscow. That is why we signed a treaty and we are fulfilling it. There is now no reason as yet to even talk of us revising this treaty. No one in Belarus is talking about that, and this goes for me and other leaders, and this goes for our people, too."

"People believe in the sincerity of the Belarusian president and they see that I am doing all I can to extricate the republic from the crisis. I am doing this not by following some kind of path which our people find incomprehensible. I offer the people specific measures, firmly rooted in reality, measures they find comprehensible. They can see I am working in a normal direction, that I take control over the affairs of state, something that is now happening in Russia. I want the people of Russia to know that the overwhelming majority of the Belarusian population have the best of feelings toward them. I want our people to be together, it is my sincere desire."

Belarus: Lukashenka Interviewed Prior to Russia Visit

MK2702113296 Moscow RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA in Russian 24 Feb 95 pp 1-2

[Interview with Alyaksandr Lukashenka by RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA Chief Editor Timofey Kuznetsov: "We Must Meet Each Other Halfway Openly and Honestly"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Republic of Belarus President Alyaksandr Lukashenka arrives in Russia for his first official visit on 27 February. On the eve of this event, the leader of the fraternal state met in Moscow with RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA Chief Editor Timofey Kuznetsov and answered questions from him.

[Kuznetsov] Alyaksandr Hrihoryevich, you are known to be a consistent advocate of bringing CIS countries closer together in every way. Will the coming visit mark an important step in this direction?

[Lukashenka] We attach tremendous importance to the first official visit to Moscow. People are hopefully awaiting its results. Yes, we are ready for very broad integration. But it has nothing to do with idle assumptions that Belarus will any day now become a Russian Federation province. This is simply impossible.

As for what is important and valuable, it is that Belarus and Russia have managed to create an economic area where half of the rules of the game for business entities are already the same. Why not take the next step to make all of them the same? [passage omitted]

[Kuznetsov] Let's go back to Russia-Belarus relations. I remember that you were the only deputy to have voted in the republic's Supreme Soviet against the Belovezhskaya Pushcha Agreements, and now you are the president of a sovereign state. How are your contacts with B. Yeltsin shaping up?

[Lukashenka] We have always found understanding; we trust each other. Those positive results I spoke of at the very beginning are the result of joint efforts.

[Kuznetsov] Will you discuss the pre-election situation in Russia?

[Lukashenka] If we come to speak about it, I will first of all ask Boris Nikolayevich [Yeltsin] to tell people the entire truth about what happened at Belovezhskaya Pushcha. As far as I know, the disintegration of the [Soviet] Union was least of all needed by Russia and Yeltsin: He could in fact automatically become USSR president. Things played out differently, however....

I am looking with satisfaction at the correction of the reform course. This step is sensible: a collapse should not be allowed.

I was constantly criticized for being way behind the Russian reforms. I used to answer: Wait and see, time will show who is right. The new people in the Russian Government conform with the course correction. These are down-to-earth, practical people, pragmatists. You can talk sensibly with them. From my point of view, the emerging change has made it possible for Boris Nikolayevich to enter the election campaign from a center-left position. Should this be of lasting effect, Thank God!.... [passage omitted]

Belarus: Lukashenka Wishes Yeltsin Election Success

MM2702115796 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA
PRAVDA in Russian 27 Feb 96

[Report by Viktor Shutkevich on interview given to the Russian press by Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka, under the "Direct Speech" rubric: "Price of Friendship in Dollars per Barrel" from the "Business Tuesday" supplement p 2]

[FBIS Translated Text] Alyaksandr Lukashenka will make his first official visit to Moscow 27 February. The Belarusian president met with the chiefs of a number of Russian publications, including KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA, on the eve of his visit. We publish his answers to some of our questions.

What We Are Building

[Lukashenka] Let us be realists. The fact that the Soviet Union was destroyed and the way it was destroyed were a crime, in my view. However, the re-creation of the Soviet Union today in its previous form is unrealistic. It is our conviction that it is far simpler and more effective to start a process of rapprochement with the development of bilateral ties. I hope that my first official visit to Moscow as head of the Belarusian state

will place relations between Belarus and Russia on a qualitatively new level.

The Belarusian State System

[KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA] Your political adversaries accuse you of recklessly throwing yourself into Russia's embrace because you have no belief in the Belarusian people....

[Lukashenka] I do believe in my people and I believe that they can live and develop autonomously: It was no accident, after all, that Belarus was called the country's assembly shop.... But why should Russia and Belarus seek to overcome the crisis separately? I will give an example: Our Minsk Tractor Plant, although it has been forced to cut back on output, produces more tractors than all the other plants remaining on the territory of the former USSR. Yet Russia is at this time intent on organizing the production of similar tractors? Why?! After all, our existing capacities could be used! And there are many such examples.

I would stress that we are not talking about Belarus' affiliating [prisoyedineniye] to Russia but about rapprochement and integration between our republics. I regard all the talk about how Belarus could become a Russian province as utter nonsense....

Debts and Settlement

[KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA] Belarus' debt to Russia for oil and gas... will probably be one of the most painful topics at the talks that you will be holding with the Russian leadership....

[Lukashenka] I would put it differently: We will be holding talks not about clearing debts but about settling the economic accounts between our states. The so-called Belarusian debt has developed in recent years as a result of a drastic and, in our view, unfair growth in prices charged for Russian sources of energy. Unfair because it does not take account of the special nature of the relationship between our countries. At the Russian side's suggestion, for example, we drastically raised our customs duties on imported automobiles last year, as a result of which the Belarusian exchequer suffered huge losses — so large that this decision recently had to be somewhat modified.

As part of our military cooperation we have given the go-ahead to complete the construction of the ultramodern Russian radar station at Hantsevichi, which the West offered us from \$3 billion to \$7 billion to dismantle. That sum plus interest would be enough for us to settle all our current debts. We do not even raise at talks questions concerning payment for the transit of Russian

goods, the upkeep of military units, and social provision for military pensioners, as certain other republics of the former Union do. It is far more precious for us to maintain good-neighborly, friendly, and trusting relations with the fraternal Russian people. But we would hope for a similar attitude toward us on the Russians' part.

Relations With Yeltsin

[KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA] The election race is starting in Russia. Which of the two most likely contenders — Yeltsin or Zyuganov — would you like to see as president?

[Lukashenka] It is a purely internal affair for Russia in which I have no right to interfere. I will therefore express my opinion not as president but simply as an individual. Purely in human terms and on the political plane I feel closer to and identify more with Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin. He has always supported me. True, I have had occasion to hear reproaches about why economic reforms are not being carried out as quickly and resolutely in Belarus as in Russia? Everything, it seems to me, has now fallen into place: Boris Nikolayevich has acknowledged that substantial errors were made in carrying out the Russian reforms — here I would like to put the word between quotemarks [no word actually quoted]. In my view, a shift is taking place in Russian politics, and it is understandable that "new old people" who are in tune with this change of policy should have been called in to run the economy. I therefore sincerely wish Boris Nikolayevich success in the upcoming election.

But if we are talking about the Communist candidate.... As far as our own Belarusian Communists are concerned I do not trust them. In my view, these people are incapable of breaking with the past. I have met Zyuganov only once, and our conversation did not amount to much. But, I repeat once again, we will be ready to do business with whichever president is chosen by the Russian people.

Belarus: Lukashenka: Countries 'Very Close' to Union

MM2702113396 Moscow *RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA* in Russian 24 Feb 96 pp 1-2

[Interview with Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka by *RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA* chief editor Timofey Kuznetsov in Minsk; date not given: "We Must Meet Each Other Half-Way, Openly and Honestly"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Alyaksandr Lukashenka, president of the Republic of Belarus, arrives in Russia 27

February for the first time on an official visit. In the run-up to this event the leader of the fraternal state met with *RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA* chief editor Timofey Kuznetsov in Minsk and answered his questions.

[Kuznetsov] Alyaksandr Hryhoryevich, it is well known that you are a consistent supporter of all-around rapprochement between the CIS countries. Will the upcoming visit be a significant step in this direction?

[Lukashenka] We attach enormous significance to the first official visit to Moscow. People await its results with hope. Yes, we are ready for very broad integration. But that has nothing in common with idle suggestions that Belarus is going to become practically a province of the Russian Federation any day now. That is simply not possible.

What is important and valuable is that Belarus and Russia have been able to create an economic area in which the rules of the game for economic entities are already half identical. Why not take the next step, and make them completely identical?

[Kuznetsov] Such a measure will doubtless have critics on both sides of the abolished border....

[Lukashenka] So as to avoid unsubstantiated talk to the effect that our cooperation cannot be equal and mutually advantageous, I would advise the skeptics to set everything out clearly and work it out properly. Our policy with regard to Russia is open, honest, and is certainly not determined by our need to obtain, for instance, oil or metal.

Let me remind you: When it was part of the USSR, Belarus was not a burden on the country. On the contrary — it gave the Union budget more than 2 billion rubles a year. A huge sum, in those days. Furthermore it provided Moscow, Leningrad, and the entire Army with meat. Incidentally, even now our agricultural produce is considerably cheaper than in other regions.

On the other hand, after the Great Patriotic War the republic's industry was built up — taking into account the proximity of the CEMA [Council for Economic Mutual Assistance] countries — as the Union's "assembly shop," linked to thousands of enterprises in the integrated national economic complex. The severance of the ties that had been developed is mutually painful.

[Kuznetsov] You are right, facts like these speak eloquently in favor of the restoration and preservation of such ties: The "Atlant" joint-stock company, which produces the famous "Minsk" refrigerator, has partnership relations with many Russian plants and provides 80,000 jobs for its associates! But the "arithmetic" of interests in general is probably rather more complex?

[Lukashenka] Of course. For instance, the customs union between Russia and Belarus was born as a result of a compromise. For example, we lost substantial sums on car imports, but gained on energy sources. So if there is sufficient will, integration between our two states can move forward very substantially. However, it is hardly necessary to "push back the tide" on the question of the re-creation of the USSR. This is unrealistic now. Furthermore, even if we find mutually acceptable decisions at the highest level, unfortunately they are not always fulfilled to the fullest extent. For instance, we reached agreement with Turkmenistan on gas deliveries on the following basis: It provides a certain quantity of gas to Russia, which then supplies us. We could supply our cars and tractors to Turkmenistan in exchange. But the project's implementation is not yet working, unexpected obstacles have arisen. Well, that's life. It is necessary patiently to overcome the barriers.

[Kuznetsov] Surely those responsible for putting it into practice have not let you down?

[Lukashenka] In this case, problems arose at intermediate levels. But sometimes surprises crop up where you don't expect them. In principle I am in favor of widely coordinating policy with the leaders of the former USSR republics. Alas, certain leaders behave inconsistently, to put it mildly. I will never agree to that game. We must meet each other half-way, openly and honestly.

[Kuznetsov] Let us come back to Russian-Belarusian relations. As I remember, you were the only deputy to vote in the republic's Supreme Soviet against the Belovezhskaya Forest agreements, but now you are president of a sovereign state. How are your contacts with B. Yeltsin developing?

[Lukashenka] We have always found a mutual understanding, we trust each other. And the positive processes I mentioned at the outset are the result of joint efforts.

[Kuznetsov] Will you be discussing the election situation in Russia?

[Lukashenka] If the subject comes up I will ask Boris Nikolayevich first and foremost to tell people the whole truth about what happened in Belovezhskaya Forest. As I understand it, the collapse of the Union was the last thing Russia and Yeltsin wanted: After all, he could, basically, have automatically become president of the USSR. But it turned out differently....

I look on the adjustment of the course of reforms with satisfaction. This is a sensible move: A landslide cannot be permitted.

I was constantly criticized for lagging behind Russia's reforms. I replied: "Wait and see, time will tell who is right." The new people in the Russian Government are promoting an adjustment of the course. These are people with their feet on the ground, practical people, pragmatists. You can talk to them at a human level. From my point of view, the change that has taken shape has enabled Boris Nikolayevich to enter the election fight from left-centrist positions. If it lasts — God willing!...

[Kuznetsov] AS a rule, official visits are preceded by thorough preparation and painstaking work on the documents. But it cannot be denied that there are forces that assess your activities by no means unequivocally. Will they be able to influence the success of the talks?

[Lukashenka] Nowadays it is customary to say that everything has its price. But even if you take that line, our policy cannot be evaluated in dollars alone. I make no secret of the fact that we are offered huge sums of money to reorient ourselves toward the West. True, in the past 18 months our debts to Russia have reached \$180 million a year. But 225 million belonging to Belarus have remained frozen in the Bank for Foreign Economic Activity. Furthermore, on the Western border we protect the interests — both political and strategic — not only of our republic, but of Russia too. Without that, how much would it cost the Russians to set up defensive borders and maintain a large army grouping in the region of Smolensk? Such calculations could be continued. But let us leave them to those who do not know how to think. I will say something else: The Belarusians have a strong historical memory. And if it turns out that it is necessary to rebuff foreign aggression, it will make no difference to us — we will defend Russia as if it was our native land. All we will ask for is the fuel oil to fuel the hardware....

[Kuznetsov] So no sensations should be expected?

[Lukashenka] I know what direction I will be acting in in Moscow. Further rapprochement and integration. Russia and Belarus are very close to a union. I would propose that relations be based on EU principles, so as to further develop and deepen cooperation. I would even say this: Nobody can use me as a puppet, but if it is for our peoples' good, fine!

Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan: Foreign Minister on 'Fruitful' Visit to Eastern Europe

LD2402135396 Bishkek Kyrgyz Radio First Program Network in Russian 0900 GMT 24 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] At a news conference Foreign Minister Roza Otunbayeva said the visit by the Kyrgyz official delegation to countries of Eastern Europe, which has finished [words indistinct], was useful and fruitful. [passage omitted]

Talks were held at the highest level. The heads of states and governments and speakers of parliament voiced their readiness to cooperate on the basis of mutually beneficial principles to develop production, trade, education, health care, tourism, and cultural exchange. Special attention was paid to the issue of educational exchanges and the possibility for Kyrgyz students to study in these countries. Specific agreements were reached with the Polish Academy of Sciences on allocating grants to Kyrgyz postgraduate students invited there and on probationary study periods for our students in higher educational establishments of the Czech Republic and Ukraine.

During meetings with the business circles of each country, the possibilities for setting up joint ventures in industry and agriculture were discussed, along with the most profitable forms of investment in the Kyrgyz economy. The power engineering projects proposed by the Kyrgyz side evoked great interest.

The next step on the path to concluding concrete agreements should be the arrival in our Republic this year of a large group of entrepreneurs and businessmen from Poland, and (?a visit) is expected of health care specialists from Hungary.

The visit by the official delegation of Kyrgyzstan led by Foreign Minister Otunbayeva to the countries of Eastern Europe has opened the way for broad and multifaceted cooperation between the Republic and this region, which has considerable economic and political potential, and has paved the way for Kyrgyz President Akayev's visit here in the second half of this year.

Kyrgyzstan: Government Resigns Following 10 Feb Referendum

LD2602200196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1731 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bishkek, Feb 26 (INTERFAX) — The entire Kyrgyz government led by Apas Dzhumagulov tendered its resignation Monday, the presidential press service told Interfax. Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev formally accepted the resignation later Monday

afternoon, but this cabinet will continue as acting cabinet until a new one is appointed.

The resignation followed the February 10 referendum on constitutional amendments which widened government and presidential powers.

According to the amended constitution, the previous government is to resign automatically, the press service explained. The president will personally appoint ministers. At the same time, the candidate for prime minister is subject to approval by the Assembly of Popular Representatives, a house of the republic's bicameral parliament.

Akayev suggested that Assembly Chairman Almambet Matbraimov approve Dzhumagulov as prime minister again on at the next parliamentary session.

Tajikistan

Tajikistan: Rakhmanov Informs Butrus-Ghali of Ceasefire Extension

LD2602174296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1721 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DUSHANBE, February 26 (Itar-Tass) — Tajik President Emomali Rakhmanov sent a message to U.N. Secretary General Butrus-Ghali on Monday informing him about the Tajik government's decision to extend a ceasefire agreement for the duration of its talks with the opposition without any preconditions.

The agreement expired today.

Rakhmanov also confirmed the government's determination to continue, with the U.N. mediation, the dialogue with the opposition, adding that there is no peaceful alternative to a political settlement.

The president reiterated his invitation to the opposition leaders to attend a special session of the national parliament and expressed the hope that the government's peace proposals will be taken by the opposition with understanding.

Rakhmanov asked the U.N. chief to consider his message as the expression of the official position of the Tajik leadership and help implement the proposals laid out in it.

Earlier today, the Tajik government said it had agreed to extend a ceasefire agreement for the duration of the intra-Tajik talks without any preconditions.

In an interview with Itar-Tass, Tajik Foreign Minister Talbak Nazarov, who leads the government delegation to the talks with the opposition, said that the position

of the Tajik government and the president had been made known to the United Nations and all countries monitoring the talks.

The Tajik government believes that the cessation of fire and other hostilities in the republic is a necessary prerequisite for the success of the peace talks, Nazarov said.

Tajikistan: Rakhmanov Favors Liberalization of Currency Operations

LD2602190296 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1731 GMT 26 Feb 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Emomali Rakhmanov has issued a decree on liberalization of currency and export operations and on measures to ensure "complete return of currency gains to the republic."

In line with the document, earnings in foreign currency transferred into export enterprises' accounts after the sale of their products, works and services "are free from any deductions and are to be used by them for their own needs not in contradiction to the acting legislation."

The decree also cancels the previously established principles of obligatory sale of currency gains received from sale of export production by enterprises and organizations.

In addition, the decree cancels export customs tariffs from March 1, 1996. The decree stipulates that export of cotton fiber and its products, primary aluminium and goods made from its ores, concentrates, wastes

from precious metals, precious natural stones and goods made from them is carried out by means of interest advance payment. The list of these goods also includes unprocessed leather, mineral fertilizers, natural honey, medicine plants, resin found in the mountains and used to cure different diseases, and snake poison.

Legal entities and individuals, with the exception of people exporting products from their own land plots, may dispatch export resources from the republic for prices established on the world market or on the Tajik commodity exchange. They also must present a document signed by representatives of Tajikistan's National Bank and other banks from the republic confirming receipt of currency earnings gained from sale of goods.

Commenting on the presidential decree, presidential press secretary Zafar Saidov said that the decree was adopted in order to implement the program of economic transformations in the republic. In particular, it will be possible to regulate operations in foreign currency and to establish control over incoming currency assets received from export of goods.

A government commission to coordinate issues related to practical implementation of the program of economic transformations for this year will be created in line with another presidential instruction.

Prime Minister Yakhye Azimov will head this commission. Tajikistan's enterprises, institutions and organizations, irrespective of their forms of ownership, and citizens of the republic are obliged to fulfil the resolutions of the government commission.

Armenia**Armenia: Premier Says Armenia CIS Leader in Economic Growth**

LD2602185596 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1731 GMT 26 Feb 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Grant Bagratyan believes the speed of economic growth in Armenia is faster than in all other former Soviet republics, including Baltic states.

"Cardinal economic reforms have started producing fruit," he told a news conference in Yerevan at which he summed up the results of his cabinet's performance during the past three years.

The prime minister said the gross domestic product grew 6.9 percent compared to 1994, the combined national income 5.8 percent and industrial production 3.4 percent.

Monetary incomes in comparative prices went up 190 percent and spending 230 percent. The consumer price index in 1995 amounted to 132.2 percent.

Bagratyan stressed 1995 became the first year when all economic indices became positive.

"In the speed of growth we have gone ahead of Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Georgia and other countries," he said.

In his opinion CIS countries lagging behind in reforms "are ready to give up any aspect of their independence now, hence the strengthening calls for the revival of the USSR". Bagratyan spoke for remembering that the Soviet Union collapsed "for the simple reason that it disregarded the laws of international development in their political and economic aspects".

He recalled that at the beginning of 1993 Armenia suffered from a severe economic slump and was in the last place among CIS countries. However, after launching "full-scale reforms the same year" Armenia managed to pass other former Soviet republics the economic policies of which "were more conservative and dogmatic".

On the current work of his cabinet Bagratyan said it "still faces manifestations of primitive thinking" which gives the government the role of a distributor of goods. He called such an approach to the functions of the executive branch of power "emotional and ignoring the laws of government".

Bagratyan admitted that his cabinet is forced to take unpopular steps arousing public discontent. However, he is convinced such steps will save the country in the

long run and impressively raise living standards in two or three years. "There can be no concessions here", he said.

Bagratyan named as the priorities of the executive branch of power in 1996 stability of social and political structures and the development of a new labor code "considering that a great number of businesses has been privatized".

The prime minister also spoke for reforming the system of law enforcement, the criminal and civic codes in particular, because "they remain virtually socialist and are based on the principle of protecting the rights of the state" though it is necessary to switch to the protection of civil and human rights.

Bagratyan stressed the need to revise the principles of government adding that "the time of the irresponsible system of Soviets has long passed". He attached serious hopes to the reform of local-self government bodies launched under the new constitution. In his opinion their establishment will not be easy.

Bagratyan spoke for a reform of budget spending, in particular financing science, health protection and culture in keeping with government plans on a competitive basis. He thinks this will help to "concentrate on true values and cast away false ones".

Azerbaijan**Azerbaijan: Aliyev Says Azerbaijan, Armenia on Point of Peace**

LD2602180296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English
1643 GMT 26 Feb 96

[By Sevindzh Abdullayeva and Viktor Shulman]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] BAKU, February 26 (ITAR-TASS) — Azerbaijan and Armenia are now closer than ever to a major peace agreement, Azerbaijani President Geydar Aliyev said on Monday.

"We must turn the truce into a lasting peace," Aliyev told Joe Pressel, the U.S. envoy to the Minsk group of the Organisation for Cooperation and Security in Europe.

"The two countries signed a truce in May, 1994. Azerbaijan may agree on a compromise only if the opposing side will do the same," Aliyev said without elaborating.

Aliyev hailed efforts by Russia and the United States aimed at ending the Karabakh conflict. He stressed that he counted on the mediators' fruitful activities.

Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov and his U.S. counterpart Warren Christopher agreed to pool efforts in settling the conflict at a recent meeting in Helsinki.

According to Pressel, Baku and Yerevan are longing for the speediest possible solution to the conflict. However, the two sides should make appropriate steps towards it, he said.

Pressel said the current conditions were the most favourable for a breakthrough and offered himself as a mediator for the purpose.

If the chance is missed now, the negotiating process may last for one or two years, he said.

Azerbaijan: Aliyev, Guliyev Receive U.S. Envoy for Karabakh

*NC2602210096 Baku Radio Baku Network in Azeri
1700 GMT 26 Feb 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Azerbaijani President Geydar Aliyev today received Joseph Presel, the U.S. special envoy for the Nagorno-Karabakh problem.

Presel indicated that the United States is interested in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem, recalling the meeting between Azerbaijani President Geydar Aliyev and Bill Clinton last October.

Referring to efforts aimed at achieving a lasting solution in the region, Presel said that he attended the Minsk Group's regular session in Helsinki and held talks with both sides' representatives. He said that the Azerbaijani president and the Armenian president are both working for peace. [Words indistinct] (?He) said that the road to peace is not easy. In expressing (?admiration) to the heads of states for the cease-fire, which is to begin its second year in May, the envoy stressed that a real basis exists for the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. If no (?good-will) steps are taken (?at this stage), the (?overall) situation could change and [word indistinct] could result in the economic and political life of the opposing sides. The talks held between the U.S. Secretary of State Christopher and Russian Foreign Minister Primakov on the Nagorno-Karabakh problem give reason to believe that this problem will be solved soon. The ministerial-level meeting in Moscow in March and the [word indistinct] meeting between U.S. President Bill Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin in April have created hopes that important steps will be taken in this direction.

After hearing Presel's report on his visit to the region, Azerbaijani President Geydar Aliyev noted that Azerbaijan, which has been the victim of aggression, desires

a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. [Words indistinct] the Azerbaijani president spoke about the road leading to peace now that the cease-fire is about to enter its second year, he assessed what has been achieved.

U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan Richard Kauzlarich, Foreign Minister Gasan Gasanov, State adviser on foreign affairs Vafa Guluzade attended the meeting between Azerbaijani President Geydar Aliyev and the U.S. president's special envoy, Rasul Guliyev, chairman of the Azerbaijan National Assembly, received Presel on 26 February.

In welcoming him, the parliament speaker said that the Azerbaijani people are hopeful about U.S. efforts for a peaceful solution to the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group. At the same time, he noted with regret that, despite Azerbaijan's constructive position, Armenia has always been [words indistinct] the talks on various pretexts.

In thanking Guliyev for the sincere reception, Presel said that he shares these views and stressed the need to speed up the talks. Many views were shared on problems obstructing a solution to the conflict.

(Philip Renie), a U.S. State Department official, and U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan Richard Kauzlarich, his assistant, and [word indistinct] were also at the meeting.

Georgia

Georgia: Shevardnadze Weekly Interview 26 Feb

*LD2602134796 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network
in Georgian 0617 GMT 26 Feb 96*

[Regular weekly interview with Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze by correspondent Nato Oniani in Tbilisi — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Oniani] Good morning. We present a radio interview with Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze.

Mr. President, a visit to Georgia by a UNESCO delegation was probably one of the most interesting events during the past week, inasmuch as the subject of power engineering is rather acute for us. They spoke about non-traditional methods of power engineering. This subject was discussed at a meeting with [UNESCO Director General] Federico Mayor during your visit to France. Later, very significant points were introduced in a document, I mean a document on UNESCO- Georgian relations signed during Federico Mayor's visit to Tbilisi.

Yet another interesting economic point from the past week is that, according to the president of the Georgian International Oil Consortium, restoration and rebuilding

will begin in May and work will begin on 27 February on drafting a package of documents, which you will sign along with representatives of the International Oil Consortium and Azerbaijani President Geydar Aliyev.

[Shevardnadze] Good morning. I will certainly answer your question but, if we list the issues according to their importance, I would say that the principal topic of the internal political and economic life of the country during the past week was the draft law on the ownership of the arable land. [Passage omitted: Oniani apologizes for planning to ask the question later]

That is why I would like to start the interview with this topic. Because it is, indeed, an issue of major significance for our society and passions will be flared up for quite a while. Therefore, it is desirable that everyone should express his stand and attitude toward the issue.

The society's opinion and parliamentary debates prove unequivocally that the significant majority of the Georgian population, those who consider the fate of the Georgian land as an issue of vital importance for Georgia, who think of the revival of the Georgian economy and who can have an expert view on the issue, support the draft law. [passage omitted]

Recognition of the private ownership of land is the major issue now and the draft law, discussed by the parliament, is able to settle the issue. The point is that we will not be able to regard the establishment of real market relations or the building of the new economy and a new state as an irreversible process unless the issue of land ownership is resolved.

All this was proved as the Georgian Parliament approved the draft law at the first hearing last Friday. In order to settle the debates around the issue of major importance for the country, it is necessary that the draft law be perfected and balanced in a serious way. We spoke about this at a republican meeting yesterday which was attended by representatives of provincial administrations, regional administrators, town mayors, heads of ministries and departments, scientists and the media. Very interesting remarks and suggestions were made at the meeting. To introduce those into the draft law and to carry out adequate explanatory work among the population, an action group has been set up, which is headed by the minister of state. [passage omitted]

To further improve the draft law, it is necessary that we listen to all the opponents who bring in businesslike and constructive remarks on individual paragraphs and even on individual words of the draft, because there are serious nuances in the wording of the law. [passage omitted]

When rejecting even the most clearly unacceptable remark, we have to present a reasoned proof in order to assure the population that the adoption of the law is not a mere objective related to, as it is said, the allocation of credits by the World Bank.

This is, indeed, only one aspects. If we pass the law, the allocation of the credit will become easier. If not, we may probably get the credit anyway. Russia does not have a law like this but they still got a credit. This is also the case with other countries. Thus, this issue should not be used for speculations.

The main thing is that we will not be able to carry out a fully fledged agrarian reform without this law. The law is essential for establishing the land market. Along with being of profound economic significance, this law can become a political challenge along the path of the complete rejection of the totalitarian system of the economy. [passage omitted]

A law on commercial banks, which was adopted by the parliament last week, is very important for the civilized financial market and enterprises. I am saying without exaggeration that this is yet another stage in establishing new economic relations and, to be more concrete, in creating a two-tier banking system. [passage omitted]

Yet another point, which I view as a significant one, concerns the results of industrial production in January 1996, published by the Committee for Social and Economic Information. Products worth 33.5 million lari were manufactured in January. This is the first instance of an increase in production. It increased by 4.2 percent compared to January last year, or by 1.5 million lari, after a continuous fall during several years. The rise is rather small but this shows a trend toward a healthier economy. [passage omitted]

As you already mentioned, Georgia received several interesting visitors last week. Among those, I would like to point out members of the Caucasus group of the German Bundestag, headed by Willi Wimmer who is also a vice president of the European Interparliamentary Assembly. Their meeting with the Georgian president emphasized the necessity of establishing stability in the Caucasus and the necessity of expanding the Europe-Asia corridor. I feel that Europe is beginning to realize gradually the significance of this corridor which would pass through the Transcaucasus. [passage omitted] The meeting also indicated the great significance of Georgia's integration in the European community.

The development of our country's transport system was discussed at a meeting between the president and representatives of the World Bank. We spoke about a rehabilitation loan for the transport system, the project

on restructuring Georgian transport and the significance of railways and other means of transport for transporting oil. I have to indicate that this is the first year that the World Bank and European financial establishments have planned serious investments for the revival of the Georgian transport system, which includes the railway and the highway network. We are to receive quite large sums to bring roads and the railway to order and make them capable of routeing cargoes.

The sphere of interests of the chairman of the German "Industrialandlagen" construction and consulting company included prospects for the probable construction of an oil refinery in Georgia. [passage omitted]

You also mentioned an event carried out by UNESCO. The topic and the proceedings of the conference demonstrated clearly the prospects of developing nonstandard methods of producing energy in Georgia. Very well drafted recommendations were given. I also welcome an initiative by UNESCO to have a modern Georgian village built in the Vardzia area in southern Georgia.

As far as the conclusions on the final version of the westward Caspian oil pipeline is concerned, the signing of a document will take place in Tbilisi during a visit by Azerbaijani President Geydar Aliyev, to which the Georgian authorities attach profound significance. I would like to recall that the issues of the so-called northern route were discussed in Moscow and accordingly the ceremony of signing appropriate documents was held there. Now it is Tbilisi's turn. [passage omitted]

[Oniani] Along with the laws you spoke about, the Abkhazian issue was also quite topical during the past week. Members of the Bundestag delegation spoke about this at their news conference. Also interesting was a statement made by [Abkhaz separatist leader] Vladislav Ardzinba. He said he was looking forward to meeting you. He also said he was satisfied with his meetings with representatives of the Russian authorities, especially with [Russian Foreign Minister] Primakov. He appreciates the stand of the Russian authorities in respect of the Abkhazian issue and is satisfied with it.

A few days before this statement by Ardzinba, you said a similar thing in your Monday radio interview. You said that you were satisfied with Russia's stand and you drew special attention to Primakov's stand and of course to statements made by the president and by [Defense Minister] Grachev. This somehow reminds me of a meeting in Gudauta some time ago, when you went to Gudauta. Indeed, you did not express satisfaction then. You simply said that it was a necessary move and that everything was still to come and that the results would

be seen later. Ardzinba expressed his satisfaction with Russia's stand at that time too.

What I want to say is that both sides cannot be equally satisfied with one and the same process, can they?

[Shevardnadze] You began your question by mentioning the Bundestag delegation and I would like to say in a few words that the stepping-up of activities with regard to the Abkhazian issue not only by international organizations like the United Nations and the Security Council but also by individual European countries, Germany in particular, and European structures has become noticeable. I welcome their fresh interest and urge to participate in the process of a peaceful settlement.

As for your question, I can admit that there are no grounds for great satisfaction at all. Neither for us nor for the Abkhaz side. Yet, as I have said, an insignificant progress, I would like to emphasize that it is a very insignificant progress, can be observed. As it often happens in politics, it is convenient to show a stand of a satisfied party and very often politicians strike a corresponding attitude.

As far as the true picture is concerned, we can see a more clear-cut shaping of Russia's stand in respect of settling the Abkhazian issue following the 19 January CIS summit. I want to emphasize the role of the CIS, along with that of Russia. Incidentally, a statement adopted by the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly in St. Petersburg is really characteristic against the background of the current processes. I believe that a way should be found to ensure that this statement is heard by citizens residing in Abkhazia, by citizens of Georgia.

A prompt and peaceful settlement of the conflict is in the vital interest of the Abkhaz and Georgian peoples, the whole Caucasus and the Black Sea countries, including Russia.

I would also like to add that Vladislav Ardzinba's so-called fresh initiatives and, to be just, the core of common sense, which is difficult to notice with a naked eye, have not missed my attention. I would like the Abkhaz side to know this.

And most importantly: there is less and less time left for an active peace process. Hence, the conclusion which we as well as the Gudauta leaders have to draw.

[Oniani] Russian President Yeltsin's address on the Russia for which we all responsible was circulated last week. This was in fact an appeal to the Russian electorate and to deputies. There were many interesting points in the address, which, actually, included a review of Russia's past and its prospects for the future, the future as seen by one of the candidates for the Russian

presidency. I would like to ask you to comment on this address. And yet another interesting event. A Social Democratic Party has been established in Russia and it is headed by a well-known figure, Gavriil Popov.

[Shevardnadze] My comments on the two issues will be quite brief because these are processes occurring in a foreign country. Indeed, I have closely familiarized myself with Boris Yeltsin's speech and my opinion is that the Russian president has managed to establish a platform which is acceptable for the majority of the Russian electorate. This is likely to have a major effect on the process of the forthcoming election and the results of the election.

As far as the establishment of a real social democratic movement in Russia is concerned, it should undoubtedly be welcomed although, in my view, it happened rather late. I cannot be indifferent to the occasion at least because, as Gavriil Popov said, the movement of democratic reforms, one of the founders of which I was, had become a basis for establishing the party. [question indistinct]

[Shevardnadze] I agree with you that there are many difficulties in the Caucasus, including the North Caucasus. Against the background of these difficulties, we have to step up our efforts to find ways to reconciliation.

I myself wanted to say a few words about the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. I cannot rule out that we shall be able in the very near future to manage to establish certain positive trends. However, before a big political negotiations, a big political deal and conciliation, we have to make practical and concrete steps. I would like to say a few words about those ethnic Ossetians who were forced to leave Georgia, their homes because of the lawlessness and violence that reigned in the country at that time. They are our citizens, this is how I regard them. They may have passports of another country but I believe that justice will be restored sooner or later.

We are ready to consider the issue of their guaranteed peaceful and gradual return and indeed, I mean that ethnic Georgian refugees from Tskhinvali will also gradually and peacefully return to their homes. This will be a great step, the initiation of the process of the ultimate peaceful arrangements and the ultimate political settlement of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict.

Georgia: Defense Minister Calls For CIS Maritime Security System

MM2602152596 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian
24 Feb 96 p 2

[Report by Nikolay Musiyenko: "A Navy Is a Drain on the Pocket"]

[FBIS Translated Text] It is easier to maintain a whole ground forces brigade of the republic's Armed Forces than a single escort ship, Lieutenant General Vardiko Nadibaidze, Georgian defense minister, has acknowledged. Consequently, he said, Georgia is not raising the question of the transfer to it of part of the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet.

At the same time the minister noted that in the future it will perhaps be necessary to consider the creation of a single system for protecting the CIS countries' sea area and sea borders and as an appropriate example he cited the CIS countries' air defense system which is already operating successfully.

This is a sensible opinion which regrettably is not shared by the Ukrainian leadership, which has been demanding its "share" from Russia for four years now.

Incidentally, the Russian Federation president recently appointed Vice Admiral Viktor Kravchenko, formerly first deputy commander of the Baltic Fleet, as commander of the Black Sea Fleet. One gratifying thing here is that he certainly cannot be called an "outsider" — he served almost 25 years in the Black Sea Fleet with a number of short breaks in service and was transferred to the Baltic Sea in October 1991 from the post of first deputy chief of staff of the Black Sea Fleet. But Kravchenko is almost starting from scratch this time — the division of the Black Sea Fleet is nearly complete and in terms of strength it has long since ceased to be what it was in Soviet times.

Georgia: Naval Commander on Georgian Role in BSF Settlement

LD2602163596 Tbilisi IPRINDA in Russian
1430 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tbilisi, 26 Feb — A. Javakhishvili, commander of the Georgian Navy, has told an Iprinda correspondent that Georgia's recent claims to its share of the Black Sea Fleet can only be resolved by political means. He also said: "The commanders of the Russian and Ukrainian fleets are interested in this, as maintaining the fleet in the Black Sea is equally difficult financially both for Georgia and Ukraine."

Javakhishvili noted that the Georgian side had offered Russia and Ukraine a military base in Poti for keeping ships on combat duty. "This would enable us to create in future a unified system of the Russian, Ukrainian, and Georgian fleets," the commander said.

Georgia: Article Analyzes Transfer of CFE Quotas to Russia

AU2302153996 Tbilisi 7 DGHE in Georgian
9-15 Feb 96 p 5

[Article by Irakli Aladashvili: "Divided Quotas and Lost Levers"]

[FBIS Translated Text]

On Its Own Initiative, Georgia Has Handed Over to Russia More Than Half of Its Weapons Quotas

In one of the paragraphs in the document on the location of Russian Federation military bases in Georgia, which was initialed one year ago by the defense ministers of the two countries — Army General Pavel Grachev and Lieutenant General Vardiko Nadibaidze — , provision is made for the transfer of the basic part of the quotas allocated to the Georgian Armed Forces to the Group of Russian Forces in the Transcaucasus [GRFT].

At the end of 1991, following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the single Soviet Army, those quotas of conventional weapons that the Soviet Union received according to the Paris Treaty of 1990 were allocated to the post-Soviet states.

In 1992, the same amount of quotas of conventional weapons was determined for each of the Transcaucasian republics. The regular armed forces of Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia were given the right to have no more than 220 battle tanks, 220 armored vehicles (IFV's, APC's, and BMD's), including 135 units of heavy weapons, and also 285 artillery systems with a caliber exceeding 100 mm, up to 100 combat aircraft and 50 assault helicopters at their disposal.

During the last four years, Georgia's weaponry has not even come close to reaching these quotas.

Russia has been the basic supplier of weapons for the Georgian Army — even before the start of the war in Abkhazia when the Akhalsikhe 10th Russian Motorized Infantry Division was handed over and in recent times, following the appointment of Lieutenant General Nadibaidze as defense minister. The only exception to this, if it can be viewed as such, was the batch of Kalashnikov assault rifles smuggled in as contraband from Romania and Czechoslovakia during the Abkhazian war and, of course, the Su-25 assault aircraft produced by the Tbilisi aviation factory that,

over the last four years, has handed over to the Georgian Air Force up to two dozen such planes.

The period for regulating quotas of conventional weapons in Europe was over at the end of 1995. The military equipment located at Russian military bases was declared to be, to all intents and purposes, illegal, as the quotas governing the equipment of the Georgian Armed Forces did not extend to it and Russia's military-political circles began to take action to ensure somehow the transfer of a part of Georgia's quotas to the Russian side prior to ratification of the document on the location of Russian military bases in Georgia that had been initialed by both sides.

In spite of the repeated statements following the initialing of the document that it would only be ratified once the Abkhazian problem had been settled, Georgia's official authorities agreed to transfer more than one-half of its quotas to the GRFT, which amounted to 115 battle tanks, 160 armored vehicles, and 170 artillery systems.

It is significant that Moscow's fear of sorts was only caused by the danger of violating an international agreement. As regards ratification of the military agreement by the two countries, this does not worry Russia's military-political circles too much as Russia's military bases have been located in Georgia "de facto" (and not "de jure") for a long time. However, they have now officially acquired the right to have the heavy equipment located on their own military bases, which was the most important thing for them in the bilateral military document initialed one year ago.

The Georgian side emphasizes that a part of the quotas have been transferred to Russia temporarily and, if Georgia itself produces or acquires from somewhere a certain amount of military equipment, Moscow will have to return automatically to us the corresponding quotas. However, it is difficult to imagine (and, moreover, cannot be justified) that Georgia will begin to produce tanks and, in particular, it is unimaginable that, at such a time of economic hardship, it will manage to acquire combat equipment from abroad.

However, it is significant that, in spite of the transfer of such a large amount of quotas, the amount of Russian military equipment located in Georgia cannot fit within these quotas.

According to approximate figures, there is a contingent of 22,000 Russian soldiers located at four military bases in Georgia. They have more than 200 tanks, up to 570 armored vehicles, and 220 artillery systems. In the next six months, the command of the GRFT will quickly have to make the transferred quotas correspond to its own weapons because, as far as tanks are concerned, these

exceed the quotas by 60-70 units. In terms of armored vehicles, this disparity amounts to a huge figure — up to 300 units, and 50 units for artillery systems.

Today, Georgia itself now has the right to have only 105 battle tanks, 60 armored vehicles, and 115 artillery systems.

If, according to the new quotas, the Georgian Armed Forces have only up to 74 percent of the total number of battle tanks today and not even one-half of artillery systems, problems will arise as far as armored vehicles are concerned.

Independent military experts have repeatedly pointed out that, given Georgia's geographical conditions and, in particular, taking into account the field of combat in Abkhazia (if anyone today still thinks seriously about the restoration of Georgia's territorial integrity), it would be most realistic to place the emphasis on precisely armored vehicles as far as providing the Georgian Armed Forces with the appropriate weapons is concerned. Mobile APC's (APC-70 and APC-80) that are lightweight compared with tanks and are good for cross-country travel and, in particular, IFV's equipped with heavy weapons would be much better for offensive operations, but Georgia has found itself short of precisely this type of weapon. It has been left with the right to have only up to 60 armored vehicles, which, indeed, will be insufficient to carry out real combat assignments.

At the same time, according to the new quotas governing armored vehicles, Georgia's Armed Forces are today already violating the CFE treaty.

Independent military experts believe that, following the transfer of a part of its quotas, Georgia has lost that most important military-political lever with which it could speed up a settlement of the Abkhazian problem.

Georgia: FSK Says Armed Forces Sold Weapons to Chechen Rebels

*LD2702101596 Tbilisi IBERIA in Georgian
0930 GMT 27 Feb 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Tbilisi, 27 Feb — An Iberia correspondent has learned from reliable sources that the

Russian Counterintelligence Service (FSK) has accused Georgian armed forces of selling several dozen automatic weapons and mortars to [Chechen separatist commander] Shamil Basayev's terrorist group in the Jeirakhi gorge (on Georgia's border with both Ingushetia and North Ossetia) two weeks ago. The accusation is of an unofficial nature, and Russia has so far refrained from making official statements.

Georgia: Turkey Outlines Conditions for Financing Oil Pipeline

*LD2602171496 Tbilisi IPRINDA in Russian
1430 GMT 26 Feb 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Tbilisi, 26 Feb — An Iprinda correspondent has been told at the Georgian Embassy in Azerbaijan that Turkey is ready to undertake financial expenses for the construction and improvement of the Baku-Supsa oil pipeline. The investments for the construction of the Georgian pipeline have been estimated at \$231 million and the Russian at \$55 million.

The Turkish side has put forward two versions of financing this project: either Turkey allocates to the Governments of Azerbaijan and Georgia a credit of \$250 million on preferential terms, which will be given to AMOK (the International Azerbaijani Operational Company) to carry out the necessary work, or the interested organizations set up a consortium which will carry out construction work on the pipeline.

Turkey has laid down the following conditions:

1. Either a Turkish contractor will carry out the construction and improvement work of the Baku-Supsa pipeline, or the International Azerbaijani Operational Company together with a Turkish company;
2. The volume of the transported oil will not exceed 6 million tonnes a year — the estimated capacity of the oil pipeline.

Estonia

Estonia: President Returns From Finland, Views Visit

WS2702122096 Tallinn BNS in English
1000 GMT 27 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tallinn, February 27, BNS — Finland supports Estonia in every way in its movement toward the European Union [EU], President Lennart Meri said Monday upon his return from a working visit to Helsinki.

"Finland, like Estonia, is interested that there should be no grey zones in northern Europe," Meri told reporters.

At a meeting with Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, attended by Finnish Foreign Minister Tarja Halonen, the two heads of state exchanged information about the attitudes of EU member nations toward Estonia's accession.

"The attitudes differ in different parts of Europe," Meri stated. "We need to know the quality and depth of the opinions."

The president assured that visa-free travel between the two countries was certain to come, but remarked that Finland was very well aware of the lack of order in Estonia.

"Finland knows perfectly well that a large number of blank passports was recently stolen in Estonia," he said. "Finland knows the worth of passports' security elements and I'm especially glad that Finland has acted in a considerably more businesslike and discreet way than Estonia in solving such questions."

In the president's words, it is first of all the job of the state apparatus to demonstrate that Estonia is able to work in a businesslike manner and without fanfares.

Meri said Finland was prepared to continue and increase its support for Estonia's defense forces. As an example, he quoted the continuing training of Estonian officers in Finland.

The two presidents also talked about intensifying trade with Russia. At the request of the Finnish side, Meri described the present state of Estonian-Russian relations.

Under security issues, Meri and Ahtisaari discussed security of the Baltic Sea region and cooperation in the framework of the U.N. peace enforcement mission in former Yugoslavia.

Meri said upon his return presidents of the two countries would in the future meet regularly.

"I'm pleased to announce Martti Ahtisaari will soon come to Tallinn to continue our discussion of those problems," he said.

Estonia: Estonian, Finnish Leaders Discuss EU, Russia, Security

LD2502185396 Tallinn Radio Tallinn Network
in Estonian 1800 GMT 25 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Estonian President Lennart Meri and Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari discussed the possibilities for the expansion of the European Union [EU] at a meeting in Helsinki today.

The Finnish side informed Estonia about the positions of EU members and reconfirmed its strong support to Estonia. The Finnish side also emphasized the need to proceed from objective criteria in the process of expansion, the Presidential Office reported.

In the context of bilateral relations between Estonia and Finland, Meri and Ahtisaari discussed visa-free travel and the intensification of trade with Russia. At the request of the Finnish side, Meri described the current state of Estonian-Russian relations.

Among the security issues discussed were security in the Baltic Sea region and, in a wider context, cooperation in the UN peacekeeping operation in former Yugoslavia, the official press statement said.

At the meeting, the presidents agreed that Martti Ahtisaari was to visit Tallinn in the near future. Finnish Foreign Minister Tarja Halonen was also present at the meeting between the presidents. The meeting lasted two and half hours.

Meri is to return from his short visit to Finland tomorrow.

Estonia: Defense Ministry Official Resigns Over Spy Allegations

LD2602204596 Tallinn Estonian Television Network
in Estonian 1900 GMT 26 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Elvo Priks, a deputy chancellor of the Estonian Defense Ministry, has submitted resignation because the restoration of his honor has taken so long that this is damaging the interests of the Defense Ministry, Priks told BNS.

Priks is being accused of working with the Russian intelligence. Juhan Vark, an adviser at the Riigikogu, said recently in his secret report that Elvo Priks was an agent of the GRU [Glavnoye Razvedovatelnoye Upravleniye], the Russian military intelligence.

According to BNS, Priks is considering whether to bring civil action against Vark.

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